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THE

BOOK OF SONGS

HENRICH HEINE

STRATHEIR





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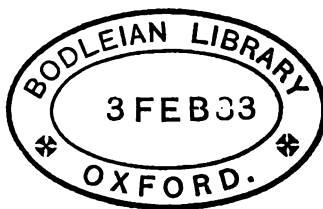
THE BOOK OF SONGS,

BY HEINRICH HEINE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

STRATHEIR.



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THE BOOK OF SONGS.

Das ist der alte Märchenwald.

Yon stands the fabled forest hoar,
The lindens scent the air !
The magic gleaming of the moon,
Enthralls my spirit there.

I rambled on and as I went,
On high a strain arose.
It is the nightingale that sings,
Of love and of love's woes.

She sings of love and of love's woes,
Of laughter and of tears,
Her blithe lament and saddened joy,
Wake dreams of vanished years.

I rambled on and as I went,
I saw before me lie,
On a wide plain a castle vast,
With gables towering high.

Closed were its casements and o'er all,
Had gloom and silence grown ;
It seemed as though still Death did dwell,
Within those ramparts lone.

Before its gate a Sphynx reclined,
Twin-wrought of love and dread,
A lion's shape and paws it bore,
A woman's breast and head.

A woman fair ! the lustrous glance
Betokened yearnings wild,
The voiceless lips high arching rose,
And mute submission smiled.

The nightingale so sweetly sang,
I could refrain no more,
And as the lovely face I kissed,
I felt that all was o'er.

The marble form to life awoke,
The stone in sighs outburst ;
She drank my kisses' glowing warmth
With craving and with thirst.

She drank my very breath away
Till, passion-swept, she flung
Her arms around my form where deep
The lion talons clung.

Ravishing anguish and rapturous woe!
Pain linked with endless bliss!
Her talons wounded, while her mouth
Entranced me with its kiss.

"O fair Sphynx!" sang the nightingale,
"O Love! what doth it mean,
That blended with the throes of death,
Are all thy raptures seen?"

"O beauteous Sphynx! unriddle me
This riddle's mystic lore,
Which now for many thousand years,
In vain I've pondered o'er."

Her eye was soft, her cheek was fair,
A pictured saint with golden hair ;
And gazing on the maid I trace
A strange and yet familiar face.

The lovely maid, she plies away,
And hums a wondrous roundelay ;
“ Ripple, ripple, springlet bright,
Wash me out the linen white.”

I went and near her as I drew,
I whispered, “ Prythee, tell me true,
For whom, sweet maid of beauty rare,
Dost thou this vesture white prepare ? ”

“ Be ready soon,” she quickly saith,
“ For thee I wash thy shroud of death ! ”
And this no sooner had she said,
Like foam away the vision fled.

Then next as if entranced I stood,
Within a wild and gloomy wood ;
The trees to heaven their summits tossed,
Amazed I stood in wonder lost.

But hark ! what hollow echoes ring !
Like distant axe-stroke’s measured swing ;
With haste through bush and brake I made,
And reached at length an open glade.

Within this sylvan circle weird,
A giant oak its form upreared ;
And lo ! my wondrous maiden fair,
Hews with her axe the oak-tree there.

Stroke follows stroke and low she sings,
A strain, while round her axe she swings,
"Iron bare, iron bright,
Quick the oak-chest trim aright."

I went, and near her as I drew,
I whispered, "Prythee, tell me true,
Thou rare sweet little maiden mine,
For whom dost trim the oaken shrine?"

"The time is brief," quick answered she,
"Thy coffin do I trim for thee!"
And this no sooner had she said,
Like foam away the vision fled.

So drear, so wide, there lay around
But the bleak forest's lonely bound ;
I knew not what befell, as there
I shuddering stood in secret fear.

And now a-sudden caught my sight,
As on I strode, a glimpse of white ;
On sped I, till my step I stayed,
For lo ! I saw the beauteous maid.

Her eye was soft, her cheek was fair,
A pictured saint with golden hair ;
And gazing on the maid I trace
A strange and yet familiar face.

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And now a-sudden caught my sight,
As on I strode, a glimpse of white ;
On sped I, till my step I stayed,
For lo ! I saw the beauteous maid.

The maiden white on open heath,
With spade delved deep the earth beneath ;
I scarce to look on her might dare,
So spectral she, and yet so fair.

The beauteous maid she plies away,
And hums a wondrous roundelay ;
“ Shovel, shovel, keen and stout,
Wide and deep the pit dig out ! ”

I went and near her as I drew,
I whispered, “ Prythee, tell me true,
Thou maiden sweet and wondrous fair,
This grave, what meaning doth it bear ? ”

“ Be still ! ” then quickly answered she,
“ A dank grave have I dug for thee.”
And as the fair maid thus replied,
The yawning sepulchre gaped wide.

As in the grave my glance I cast,
An icy shudder through me passed ;
And in the pit’s sepulchral night
I headlong fell—and woke to light.

III.

I dreamed one night I saw myself in pride
 Of sable suit and silken vest, and flowing
 Ruffles on hand as to a revel going,
 While stood my love, bright, happy by my side.
 I bent me low and said—"Are you a bride?
 Then, Madam, are my warmest wishes owing."
 But in my rising throat convulsive growing,
 The drawling, coldly courteous words near died.
 And bitter tears in sudden flow down beating,
 Fell from Love's eyes, and midst the tears breaking,
 Did soon the lovely vision vanish fleeting.
 O! most sweet eyes, Love's fairest stars, deceiving
 What though ye often are in hours of waking,
 Yet e'en in dreams must I be still believing.

IV.

A droll wee mannikin I saw in dreaming,
Who strutted upon stilts, each stride an ell,
Snowy his linen, fine his coat as well,
Within was all but coarse and sorry seeming,
Within with worthlessness and squalor teeming,
And yet without of preciousness did tell;
And long and loud his talk on courage fell,
And played the hector to be valiant deeming.
“And know’st thou who that is? Come here and see!”
So spake the dream-god, who sly showed to me
The vision’s flowing course a mirror’s frame in.
The mannikin did near an altar press,
My love stood by him, and they both said: “Yes,”
While shrieked a thousand laughing devils: “Amen.”

. V.

What goads my maddened blood to ire ?
 What fans my heart to raging fire ?
 My blood doth boil and foams and fumes,
 And frantic rage my heart consumes.

Surges my wild blood's foaming stream,
 For I have dreamed an evil dream :
 There came the gloomy son of night,
 And whirled me hence in panting flight.

To a bright bower he carried me,
 Where harp tones rose midst revelry,
 And torch and lustre flashed and glowed ;
 Within the hall I boldly strode.

It was a merry marriage feast,
 Sat round the board each jocund guest,
 And as the bridal pair I spied,
 O woe ! it was my love was bride.

It was my love all winsome seen,
 The bridegroom wore a stranger's mien ;
 Behind the bride's high chair of state,
 There silent did I stand and wait.

The music swelled,—unmoved I stayed,
The joyous peal my heart down-weighed ;
The bride, she glanced so bright and blest,
And both her hands the bridegroom pressed.

The bridegroom filled the goblet high,
And quaffed, and passed it gracefully
Towards the bride, who smiled to thank,—
O woe ! 'twas my red blood she drank.

A luscious apple took the bride,
And placed it by the bridegroom's side ;
He took his knife, cut deep a line,—
O woe ! it was this heart of mine.

Fondly their glances met and long,
Till round her bold his arms he flung,
And kissed her cheek of rosy hue,
O woe ! cold death did kiss me too.

Lay in my mouth my tongue as lead,
And ne'er a word could I have said,
When loud struck up a measure fair,
And foremost danced the happy pair.

In death-like silence as I stood,
The dancers whirled in merry mood ;—
A whispered word the bridegroom speaks,
The bride chid not—while flushed her cheeks.

VI.

I lay and slept, and softly slept,
 All grief and woe allayed ;
 When through my dream a vision swept,
 The all-bewitching maid.

As snowy marble did she seem,
 So strange and weird there ;
 Swam in her eyes a pearl-like gleam,
 Long rolled her wondrous hair.

Then moved she with light lissome grace,
 The maid as marble pale ;
 And round my heart twined sweet embrace,
 The maid as marble pale.

How throbs and beats in glad unrest,
 My heart with flame aglow !
 Nor throbs nor beats her beauteous breast,
 Which is as cold as snow.

“ My heart, it neither throbs nor beats,
 But ice-cold doth it stay ;
 Yet I have known Love’s joyous sweets,
 And his resistless sway.

“ My lip and cheek ne’er ruddy glow,
Streams through my heart no blood ;
Yet shrink not fearful shuddering so,
To thee I am sweet and good.”

And wilder clasped she me, till dread
Did all my frame assail ;
Then crowed the cock, and silent fled
The maid as marble pale.

Lieder.

I.

**I arise each morning crying,
“ Comes sweet love to-day ? ”
Sink forlorn at even sighing,
“ Stays she still away ? ”**

**Through the night I sleepless ponder,
Wakeful o'er my pain ;
Dreaming half in slumber wander,
Through the day again.**

II.

I turn hither, thither, with restless feet !
Yet a few hours and I shall be seeing
Herself, fairest maid of all fair maidens being ;
Thou true heart, why dost thou so heavily beat ?

The Hours are ever a slothful crew !
Lazily their footsteps dragging,
Yawning on their way creep lagging ;—
Speed you on, for a slothful crew !

A fierce unrest doth my spirit waste !
But have the Hours ne'er known Love's desiring ;
And in a cruel dark compact conspiring,
Mockingly jest at a lover's haste.

III.

'Neath the trees a lone ramble taking,
My sorrows I brooded o'er ;
When the olden dreams awaking,
Stole in my heart once more.

" This word, who taught ye to bear it,
Ye birds, in the breezy sky ?
Be still ! lest my heart should hear it,
And again with anguish sigh."

" A maiden passed and was singing,
And her soaring song we heard ;
And we caught as it floated ringing
The beautiful golden word."

" No more with these tales deceive me,
Ye little birds wondrous sly ;
Ye would of my sorrow bereave me,
But in none confide will I."

IV.

Dear love, on my heart lay thy little hand so ;
Ah ! hear'st how it knocks in the chamber below ?
There lodges a carpenter crafty and sly,
Who fashions a coffin wherein I must lie.

He knocks and he hammers by day and by night,
And long since of sleep hath he robbed me outright.
So then, master carpenter, quick work away,
And thus let me slumber as soon as I may !

V.

Cradle fair of hopeless yearning,
Fair grave where my peace doth lie ;
Now from thee, fair city, turning,
Bid I thee a last good-bye.

Fare thee well, thou hallowed dwelling,
Which my love oft wandered o'er ;
Farewell, hallowed spot, still telling
Where I saw her first of yore.

Had I not beheld thee ever,
Thou my heart's fair thronéd queen !
It had then befallen never,
That I have so hapless been.

Ne'er thy heart to move I've striven,
Love in me no suppliant found ;
But that life in calm be given,
Where thy fragrance breathes around.

But me hence thy bidding urges,
Bitter words thy lips outpour ;
Frenzy through my senses surges,
And my heart is sad and sore.

With weak limbs that scarce can stay me,
Staff in hand the way I brave,
Till my weary head I lay me
In a cold and distant grave.

VI.

Stay thee, stay thee, hasty boatman,
Soon with thee to port I spur ;
From two maidens I am parting,
From Europa and from her.

Bloodstream, from my eyes, run welling,
Blood, forth from my body flow ;
That in my own burning life-blood,
I may here inscribe my woe.

Ah, my love, is it now only,
On my blood thou look'st with fear ?
Thou hast seen me pale and bleeding,
Stand before thee many a year !

Knowest thou how the wily serpent,
As in ancient story taught,
By an apple's gift in Eden,
Our first parents' ruin wrought ?

'Tis the apple brings perdition !
Through it Eve did bring us death,
Eris, Troy's avenging fires,
Both thou bringest, flames and death.

VII.

Hill and castle deep are glancing,
In the crystal-mirrored Rhine,
And my merry bark is dancing,
As the sunbeams round her shine.

Calm I watch in frolic breaking,
Golden waves in dimples fair ;
Feelings silently awaking,
That deep in my heart I bear.

With a friendly ardour gleaming,
Lures the stream's refulgence bright ;
But I know its glassy seeming,
Hides within but death and night.

Fair above, within capricious,
Stream, my love thou pictur'st oft !
Her kind welcome as delicious,
And her smile as calm and soft.

VIII.

First my heart despairing o'er it,
Seemed it more than I could bear ;
Yet—and yet—withal I bore it,—
How I bore it, ask me ne'er !

IX.

Roses and cypress and beaten gold,
Would I might sweetly and tenderly fold,
This book around, and there enshrine,
As in a tomb, these lays of mine.

And there too laid, might Love repose,
For o'er Love's grave Rest's flower blows ;
There blooms and is gathered, but ne'er for me,
Till I sink in the grave, shall its blossoms be.

And here are the lays that madly of old,
Like a lava torrent from Etna rolled,
Flung raging forth from thoughts profound,
While flew their dazzling sparks around !

But now as the dead all silently,
And lifeless and cold and wan they lie.
But in them shall wake the fire of yore,
When the spirit of Love broods o'er them **once more.**

In my heart prophetic voices call,
That o'er them Love's spirit in dew shall fall ;
And this book yet thrill to the touch of thy hand,
My own sweet love, in some far-off land.

Then from its spell shall my song be free,
And the pale letters shall gaze on thee,
Beseeching looks in thy sweet eyes throw,
And plaintive breathe in love-whispers low.

Romanzen.

I.

All are with compassion smitten,
Who the pallid youth behold ;
Whose distress and sorrow written,
Stand upon his visage told.

Sympathetic breezes wing him
Coolness for his burning brow ;
Laughing comfort fain would bring him
Many a yielding maiden now.

From the town's tumultuous bustle,
Hastening to the wood he flies ;
Merrily the leaves there rustle,
Joyous songs of birds arise.

Soon the song is hushed and over,
Tree and leaf faint whispering sigh,
As the melancholy lover,
Slowly to the wood draws nigh.

II.

With sad still tread through the mountain vale,
There rode a horseman brave ;
“ Ah ! do I haste to my true love’s arms,
Or haste to the darksome grave ? ”
The echo answer gave :
“ The darksome grave.”

And onward still the horseman rides,
And sighed from his weary breast ;
“ So must I haste to the grave so soon,
Still aye in the grave is rest ! ”
The echo him addressed :
“ In the grave is rest.”

A tear the horseman’s cheek adown,
In heart-wrung anguish fell ;
“ If the grave alone hath rest for me,
For me in the grave ’tis well.”
Dull rose the echoing knell :
“ In the grave ’tis well ! ”

III.

From the mountain summit springing,
Stands the castle veiled in night ;
In the valley fiercely ringing,
Gleaming swords are flashing bright.

Brothers twain in fight are raging,
Grim in deadly strife they stand.
Say, why thus their combat waging,
Wear the brothers sword in hand ?

Gräfin Laura's eyes have lighted,
Thus the brother-strife arrayed ;
Both their maddened love have plighted
To the fair and noble maid.

Of the twain for which prevailing,
Doth her heart its love avow ?
Other judgment nought availing,
Sword ! leap forth ! decide it, thou !

Fierce and wild the combat labours,
Rings with blow on blow the fight.
Have a heed ! Ye doughty sabres !
Evil ever prowls at night.

Woe ! O woe ! ye brothers cruel !
Woe ! O woe ! thou bloody strand !
Sink both champions in the duel,
Each upon the other's brand.

In the past the years fade dimly,
Death still humankind lays low ;
Still from the hill summit grimly,
The lone castle looks below.

Yet i' the vale when night doth lower,
Strange still steps are heard again ;
And when tolls the midnight hour,
Combat there the brothers twain.

IV.—1.

Hans and Grete dance around,
And sing for very gladness.
Peter mute, breathes ne'er a sound,
And wan his face with sadness.

Hans and Grete are bridegroom and bride,
Decked for a wedding gaily.
Poor Peter bites his nails aside,
In the smock he goes in daily.

Then to himself he faintly sighs,
The pair despondent viewing:
"Some mischief were I not too wise,
To my life I'd fain be doing."

2.

“ Within my breast doth sorrow prey,
My heart asunder riving ;
And whither I go, where’er I stay,
Hence goads me onward driving.

“ It speeds me to my true love nigh,
As though could Grete heal me ;
But when I gaze into her eye,
Still on impelled I feel me.

“ I ’ll hie me to the mountain’s crest,
Where solitude shall woo me ;
And there my tears as mute I rest,
Shall silently bedew me.”

3.

The luckless Peter wanders by,
 Slow, deadly pale and timidly ;
The very people in the street
 Whene'er they see him, stay their feet.

The maidens say with bated breath,
 " He seems as risen now from death."
Alas ! ye dear maidens—no,
 He hath yet in the grave to go.

Of his dear treasure dispossessed,
 The grave is his true place of rest,
Where, lying peacefully, he may
 Sleep on until the Judgment Day.

V.

To France two grenadiers their way
Were from Russian dungeons wending,
And as o'er the German march passed they,
Their heads hung sadly bending.

There, sorrowful tidings the twain did greet,
That the might of France was shaken,
Her countless legions foiled and beat,
And the Kaiser, the Kaiser taken.

Then wept the grenadiers twain,
The rueful tale at learning.
Said one : " Ah me, how keen again
My olden wounds are burning ! "

The other spake : " The end hath come,
I 'd die with thee, ne'er doubt me,
But wife and child would dree at home,
A hapless fate without me. "

" Nor wife, nor child of mine I heed
When nobler longings waken ;
Let them go starve in hunger's need,—
My Kaiser—my Kaiser taken !

“ Yet, brother, grant me one last prayer ;
 If here my days I number,
With thee to France my body bear,
 In the soil of France to slumber.

“ When the Cross of Honour’s crimson band
 Thou on my breast hath bound me,
Then place my musket in my hand
 And gird my sword around me.

“ Thus shall I lie, and list evermore,
 My grave as a sentinel keeping,
Till I hear once again the cannons roar,
 And the neighing of squadrons sweeping.

“ Then over my grave my Kaiser shall ride
 Midst the clash of steel ascending ;
Then armed shall I leap from the grave to his side,
 The Kaiser, the Kaiser defending ! ”

VI.

Ho ! up my lad, and saddle quick,
 And mount thee on thy steed,
 And to King Duncan's castle fast,
 Through wood and meadow speed.

Into the stable slip and wait
 Till thee the groom doth see.
 Then ply him for me : " Which the bride
 Of Duncan's daughters be ? "

And says the groom :—" The nut-brown 'tis,"
 Then quick the tidings bear.
 But says the groom : " The blonde it is,"
 Such haste thou mayest spare.

Then get thee to the ropemaker,
 And buy a rope for me,
 Ride slowly, utter not a word,
 And bring it back with thee.

VII.

“ I go not alone, my dainty love,
 Thou with me must hie thee
To the olden horrorsome chamber dear,
To the cold sad house of mourning drear,
Where at the door my mother doth cower,
And for her son’s return doth glour.”

“ Aroint thee from me, thou gloomy man !
 Who summoned thee hither ?
Thy hand is ice, thine eyes flash light,
Thy breath doth burn, thy cheek is white :
My joyous life must blithely run
Where roses breathe and beams the sun.”

“ Let the roses breathe, let the sunlight beam,
 My true love sweetest !
Thy white floating veil wrap around thee nigher,
And touch the light strings of the echoing lyre,
And sing a wedding strain to me ;
The night wind pipes the melody.”

VIII.

“ Donna Clara ! Donna Clara !
Through long years loved passionately !
Thou hast willed my utter ruin,
And hast willed it without pity.

“ Donna Clara ! Donna Clara !
O 'tis sweet the boon of living !
But below us all is horror
In the death-cold grave and gloomy.

“ Donna Clara ! joy ! to-morrow
Will Fernando at the altar,
As his wedded bride salute thee ;
Wilt thou bid me to the wedding ? ”

“ Don Ramiro ! Don Ramiro !
Bitterly thy words are piercing,
Than the star's decree more bitter,
Yonder at my wishes mocking.

“ Don Ramiro ! Don Ramiro !
Banish this desponding sadness :
In the world are maidens many,
But God parteth us asunder.

“ Don Ramiro ! thou who bravely
Hast so many Moors vanquished,
Vanquish now thyself within thee,—
To my wedding come to-morrow.”

“ Donna Clara ! Donna Clara !
Yes, I swear it ; yes, come will I !
Will dance with thee in the revel :
Good night ! come will I to-morrow.”

“ Good night ! ” Down the window clattered.
Sighing stood beneath Ramiro,
As if turned to stone long stood he,
And then vanished in the darkness.

When, at length, in long encounter,
Night before the day retreated,
Like a blooming flower garden
Lay Toledo far extending.

Palaces and stately mansions
Shimmer in the sun's effulgence,
And the lofty domes of churches
Sparkle proudly golden seeming.

Like a swarm of bees loud humming,
Joyous peals of bells are ringing,
Sweetly rise the hymnèd anthems
From God's sanctuaries holy.

But behold ! behold ! where yonder,
Yonder from the market chapel,
In a crowded press and swaying,
Streams the motley throng of people.

Glittering knights and stately ladies,
Court retainers, gay-apparelled,
And the clear-toned bells are ringing,
And between resounds the organ.

But respectful space conceded,
Slowly pace amid the people,
The young wedded pair resplendent,
Donna Clara, Don Fernando.

To the bridegroom's palace portal
Surges on the throng of people ;
Then begin the nuptial revels
Stately and in olden fashion.

Tournaments and merry feasting
Alternate mid loud rejoicing ;
Joyous speed the flying hours
Till what time the night doth lower.

And for dancing congregated,
In the hall the marriage guests come ;
In the radiance of the lights gleam
Their gay, glittering apparel.

On an elevated dais,
Bride and bridegroom are reclining,
Donna Clara, Don Fernando,
And they interchange sweet whispers.

While within the hall sway merry,
The resplendent waves of people;
And the drums are loud resounding,
And the trumpets echo pealing.

“Wherefore, then, O beauteous lady,
Are directed thus thy glances
To the hall’s recesses yonder?”
Thus exclaimed the knight, astonished.

“See’st thou not, then, Don Fernando,
Yonder form in sable mantle?”
And the knight smiled answer laughing,
“Nay! ’tis nothing but a shadow.”

But the shadow came advancing,
• And it was a figure mantled,
And Ramiro quick discerning,
Clara greeted him with blushes.

But begun had now the dancing,
Merrily the dancers whirl them
In the waltz’s giddy mazes,
And the floor doth shake and tremble.

“ Certes, gladly, Don Ramiro,
Will I in the dancing join thee,
But in night-like sable mantle
Thou shouldst never here have entered.”

With transpiercing eyes and staring,
Gazed Ramiro on the fair one ;
Clasping her, thus hoarsely spake he,
“ ’Twas thyself to come that bid me ! ”

And in the wild dance’s riot,
Whirling mingle both the dancers ;
And the drums are loud resounding,
And the trumpets echo pealing.

“ Snow-white are thy cheeks in pallor ! ”
Faltered Clara, inward shuddering.
“ ’Twas thyself to come that bid me ! ”
Rang Ramiro’s voice sepulchral.

And within the hall lights shimmer
Through the crowded throng o’erflowing ;
And the drums are loud resounding,
And the trumpets echo pealing.

“ And thy hands their touch is ice cold ! ”
Faltered Clara, in terror shrinking.
“ ’Twas thyself to come that bid me ! ”
And they whirl them in the revel.

“Leave me ! leave me ! Don Ramiro !
Corpse-like is the breath thou breathest ! ”
Ring again the words sepulchral,
“ ’Twas thyself to come that bid me ! ”

And the floor doth steam and swelter,
Merrily sound bass and viol ;
Like a giddy woof of magic
All within the hall is whirling.

“Leave me ! leave me ! Don Ramiro ! ”
Ever mid the throng comes wailing.
Don Ramiro answers ever,
“ ’Twas thyself to come that bid me ! ”

“In the name of God, begone, then ! ”
Clara cried, with firmer accents,
And the word was scarcely uttered
Than had vanished Don Ramiro.

Clara, death in face, stands rigid,
In cold tremor, whelmed in darkness ;
And a swoon that radiant figure
To its gloomy realm transported.

Yields at last the mist-like slumber,
And at length her eyelids open ;
But again would mute amazement,
Seal her winsome eyes together.

Since anew the dance had opened,
She had ne'er her seat relinquished,
And she, aye, sits by the bridegroom,
And the knight doth anxious question.

“ Say what 'tis thy cheek that blanches?
Why doth seem thine eye so lightless? ”
“ And Ramiro?——” faltered Clara,
And her tongue a horror deadens.

But with earnest frown and lowering
Is the bridegroom's brow now furrowed :
“ Lady, ask not bloody tidings,
Died this day, at noon, Ramiro.”

IX.

The midnight hour drew nearer on ;
In still repose lay Babylon.

But where the royal pile gleamed high,
The monarch's train kept revelry.

Above, within the royal hall,
Belshazar held high festival.

The pages sat in glittering line,
And emptied the goblets of sparkling wine.

The goblets ring and the pages cheer,
Which gladdened the monarch grim to hear.

The monarch's cheeks a flush o'erspread :
With wine his insolence was fed.

Till blindly spurred, his rage outburst,
In blasphemous words and the Godhead cursed.

And he vaunted high and cursed aloud,
Mid applauding shouts of the serving crowd.

The monarch called with glance of flame ;
Hastening sped the page and came :

Vessels of gold on his head he bore,
Torn from Jehovah's temple of yore.

With daring hand the king snatched up,
Filled to the brim, a holy cup.

Deep to its dregs he rashly quaffed,
And with foaming lips aloud outlaughed.

“Jehovah ! for ever I thee defy,—
The monarch of Babylon am I !”

But scarce the fearful word was said,
When the monarch’s heart was struck with dread.

The echoing laughter was sudden stilled,
The hall a death-like silence filled.

And lo ! and lo ! on the wall so white,
A phantom hand arose in sight.

And wrote, and wrote, the white wall on,
Letters of fire, wrote and was gone !

Aghast doth the monarch sit and quail,
With loosened knees and deadly pale.

The attendants sat cold shuddering round,
Sat silent all and breathed no sound.

The wise men came, but none could declare
What the fiery script on the wall told there.

Belshazar the self-same night was slain
By the hands of his own serving train.

X.

In the lists of song engaging,
 March the Minnesingers by :
Strange the combat they are waging,
 Strange the tilt of chivalry !

Phantasy, foam-white, and fuming,
 Is the Minnesinger's steed,
He his art as shield assuming,
 And the word, his sword at need.

On draped balconies there place them,
 Fair dames glancing blithely down,
But the right one doth not grace them,
 With the fitting laurel crown.

Other champions enter never,
 Save unscathed, the listed ring ;
But we Minnesingers ever
 Do our death-wound with us bring.

And whose song his heart's-blood draining,
 There with fullest flow doth bleed,
He, the victor is, obtaining
 From fair lips the brightest meed.

XI.

In plaintive numbers sighing,
I an olden lay recall,
Of a knight love-wounded lying
To his false love in thrall.

Faithless must he look on her,
Though in his heart she reign,
And hold as his dishonour
His love that bleeds in vain.

In the lists what though he bear him,
And the knights to joust defy ;
“ For mortal strife prepare him,
Who dares my love decry ! ”

Yet silent are all, and burning
Is but his heart's unrest,
And he his couched lance turning
Must pierce his own sad breast.

XII.

I leaned against the mast and watched,
Each wave as on it bore me.
Sweet fatherland ! adieu ! my bark
Flies merrily before me.

Love's home I pass, the sunlight shafts,
The window panes are laving ;
I strain my longing eyes to catch
The sign no hand is waving.

Ye tears, away ! mine eyes forsake,
Lest dim their gaze be growing ;
My aching heart, break not beneath
Thine anguish overflowing !

XIII.

Sir Ulrich rides through the greenwood chase,
The leaves are merrily dancing.
He sees a form of girlish grace
Atween the branches glancing.

The stripling cried, " Ah ! well I know,
This semblance bright and beaming,
Thus lures in crowds, or silence so,
To hover round me seeming.

" Her lips, their place twin rosebuds fill,
Dainty and fresh I ween them ;
Yet many a bitter word and ill
Steals biting oft between them.

" Her mouth it can alone compare
With bowers of fairest roses,
And venomed snakes sly hissing there,
Their leafy shade discloses.

" Each dimplet there a sweeter spell
To sweetest cheeks hath given ;
It is the pit wherein I fell
By passionate longing driven.

“ And yon I see the tresses fair,
From fairest head down shaken,
And ’twas by this bewitching snare,
Was I by the tempter taken.

“ And each twin eye of blue that seemed
Like limpid waves to woo me,
Which I the gates of heaven had deemed,
Were gates of darkness to me.”

Herr Ulrich through the wood rides on,
The leaves were weirdly swaying,
Far sees he a second semblance wan,
A saddened mien betraying.

“ Oh mother,” he cried, “ whose love for me
Thy mother’s heart did quicken,
Whose life with woe so bitterly
My deeds and words have stricken ! ”

O I would fain those tear-dimmed eyne
With my sorrow’s flame be drying !
And those pale cheeks incarnadine,
With my own heart’s blood dyeing !

Sir Ulrich still doth onward ride,
O’er the wood is darkness wreathing,
Strange voices rise on every side,
And the evening winds are breathing.

The stripling seems to hear his words
Re-echoed round him lightly,
Borne by the joyous forest birds
That chirp and carol brightly.

Sir Ulrich breathes a tender strain,
The song of hapless rueing,
And when 'tis done, he chants again,
Its burden still renewing.

XIV.

Ah still can I recall the siren,
What time on her my eyes first fell !
How charmed her voice's cadence pealing,
My heart its sweet still power feeling,
While tears adown my cheek were stealing,
And what bechanced I could not tell.

A dream had o'er my spirit fallen :
'Twas though I were a child once more,
All in the lamplight sitting by it,
Within my mother's chamber quiet,
Reading weird legends while with riot,
I' the night without the wind did roar.

To life the legends seem to waken,
The knights from out the grave rise on ;
To Roncesvalles combat bending,
Roland the paladin rides wending,
With many a valiant lance attending,
And alas ! base Ganelon.

By him undone was Roland basely,
He swims in blood, scarce draws his breath ;
And ere his horn, far echoes flinging,
Floats to great Charles' ear faint ringing,
Must the knight's spirit ebb up-winging,—
And ends with him my dream in death.

Then rose a peal of voices swelling,
 That woke me from my reverie ;
The legend now had reached its ending,
The people their applause were lending,
And amidst their plaudits bending,
 The singer curtsied gracefully.

XV.

Golden ducats mine, I pray ye,
Whither have ye vanished, say ye?

Are ye with the golden fishes,
That in brooks do gay and sprightly,
In and out disport them lightly?

Are ye with the golden flowrets,
That the meadows green adorning,
Sparkle in the dewy morning?

Are ye with the golden songsters
That imbathed in glory wander
In the skies of azure yonder?

Are ye with the golden starlets
That in radiant legions brightly
Dimple in the heavens nightly?

Ah! ye golden ducats never
Swim ye in the brooklet's wave,
Nor the green mead sparkling strew,
Float not in the ethers blue,
Nor the skies with dimples pave,—
'Tis my creditors I ween,
Clutch you fast their claws between.

ROMANZEN.

XVI.

"Hear'st thou not the distant pealing,
As of bass and viol blending?
There fair dames in dance are wheeling,
In light, wingéd measures bending."

"What, my friend, thy senses is blunting?
Bass nor viol hear I pealing,
'Tis but sows I hear are grunting,
And the litter hear I squealing."

"Hear'st the blast the horn is raising?
Huntamen in the chase are glowing;
Gentle lambkins see I grazing,
Shepherds on their pipes are blowing."

"Nay, my friend, what thou art hearing,
Horn nor pipe the sound is waking:
'Tis the swincherd I see nearing,
Who his drove is homowards taking."

"Hear'st thou not the distant singing,
As in dulcet contestation?
Angels with their plumes are winging
To such strains, loud acclamation."

“Nay, the strains, so sweetly striving,
Are, friend, from no contest o’er them !
Goose-herds as they sing, are driving
Their young geese along before them.”

“Hear’st not how the bells are sending
Forth a strange sweet peal and clear ?
Pious folk devout are wending
To the village minster near.”

“Nay, my friend, that tinkling wholly
Are the cows and oxen making,
Who to their dark sheds all slowly,
With drooped heads their way are taking.”

“See’st thou not the kerchief flowing,
See’st the signal soft advances ?
There I see my love stand, showing
Tearful sadness in her glances.”

“Friend, no signal I see such is,
But the wood wife, Liza, yonder,
Pale and haggard on her crutches
Limps she to the field beyond her.”

O’er a dreamer’s queries all too,
Laugh, my friend, if such thy pleasure !
Wilt thou *that* illusion call too
Which deep in my heart I treasure ?

XVII.

A highroad vast is our earth where pace
 We men as voyagers on it ;
On horseback and foot we hurry and race,
 Like runners and couriers upon it.

Each other we pass, we signal, we greet,
 From the coaches our handkerchiefs flying,
And fain would we kiss and embrace as we meet,
 But the horses press onwards denying.

And scarce at one station alight we, when lo !
 Dear Prince Alexander, to start us,
Already his horn, the postilion doth blow,
 With a blast that asunder doth part us.

XVIII.

When spring with its sunlit skies doth break,
Then joyously flowerets blossom and sprout;
When the moon on her radiant course sets out,
Then glide forth the starlets in her wake;
When the bard two winsome eyes doth see,
From his inmost soul his songs flow free :—
But songs and stars and flowerets bright,
And eyes and moonbeams and warm sunlight,
Howe'er the gladsome pageant please,
The world's not all made up of these.

Sonnette.

To A. W. von Schlegel.

In hoop attired rich-wrought with flowered tracing,
 With beauty-patches on the cheeks be-pasted,
 With pointed shoes, where broidery shone gracing,
 And towering curls, and wasp-like, taper-waisted,
 Thus was the false muse dight what time she hasted
 To take thee lovingly in her embracing,
 Whilst thou didst aye elude her eager chasing,
 Impelled to roam by secret impulse wasted.
 There in an ancient solitude descrying
 A castle, found'st thou, like fair marble lying
 Therein a lovely maid, in charmed trance sunken ;
 Loosed was the spell, swift at thy summons breaking,
 And Germany's true muse with smiles awaking,
 Within thine arms, ecstatic, sank love-drunken.

To my Mother, B. Heine.

I.

My head right high to bear 'tis my endeavour,
With sharp rough mood am I somewhat affected,
And were a king's glance to my face directed,
My eyes before him would I lower never.
Yet, mother dear, I frankly say—however
My haughty spirit swell with pride erected,—
In thy loved presence sweet and blessed, corrected,
A modest diffidence doth seize me ever.
Is it thy spirit strangely me constraining,
Thy lofty spirit, that to all attaining
Leaps scintillant, the light of heaven gaining?
And Memory wrings me with remorse, deep leaving
The sting of many a deed, thy heart so grieving,
The true heart round me its sweet love-spells weaving.

II.

In a wild mood of yore I left thee, turning
Throughout the ends of the wide earth to wander,
To seek a love that I might meet with fonder,
And clasp it with love's own ecstatic burning.
Through every path I followed love with yearning,
With out-stretched hands before each door-step
yonder,

I begged a dole of love that men do squander,—
Yet met with but cold hate and laughter spurning.
Still ever roamed I in love's quest, and ever
I followed love, and yet did find love never,
And home returned again, heart-sick and rueing.
But thou didst come in welcome forth to meet me,
And, O ! within thy swimming eyes did greet me
The sweet love I had been so long pursuing.

To J. C.

As doth my hasty glance thy book devour,
There give me welcome many an endeared,
Many a golden scene, that whilom cheered
My boyhood's dream and childhood's happy hour.
I see once more up to high heaven tower
The sacred fane which simple faith upreared.
I hear the bells and organ-tones that weird
Love's sweet laments between impassioned shower.
Well see I too around the cupola skipping
The nimble elves that yonder with rash daring
The fair festoons and traceries down are tearing.
Yet though the oak of all its foliage stripping,
We wreck its verdant loveliness, still o'er it
Dawns a new spring that doth afresh restore it.

Fresko-Sonette an Christian S.

I ne'er with dolts consort nor do them flatter,
 Who golden are without, within but sand ;
 Nor, though he give it, take the villain's hand,
 Who doth in secret my good name bespatter.
 I fawn not on the beauty frail that at her
 Own shame shameless, doth unblushing stand ;
 Nor yoke me to the car where the herd band
 To draw their empty gods with jubilant clatter.
 I know it well, the oak prostrate descending
 Doth lie, while by the streamlet lightly bending,
 The reed through wind and weather firm doth stay.
 Yet to what end doth come such reed ? then say !
 What fortune ? As a cane a coxcomb meeting,
 Or serve as varlet's staff the clothes for beating.

II.

Ho ! with a mask that I in guise may make me,
Of some rough yokel that these knaves degraded,
Who in resplendent motley masqueraded,
For one of such as they may never take me.
To use of vulgar speech and manner break me,
I'll show myself in clownish guise paraded,
Belie the tripping sparkling wit these jaded
Blockheads affect to lisp. Thus I'll betake me
To the masked revel where confusèd neighbour
Teutonic kings, monks, knights that round me hover,
Greeted by harlequin, yet me few discover.
They with their wooden swords do me belabour.
And here's the jest. Did I unmask, astounded
Would the whole gallow's crew fall mute, confounded.

III.

I laugh at the insipid fools that staring
Gaze roundly at me with a goat's grimaces :
I laugh, too, at the foxes that with faces
Do witless yet malignant sniff me glaring.
I laugh, too, at the learned apes that airing
Their lore set up as critics in high places :
I flout the knaves whom coward fear abases
To threaten me, envenomed weapons bearing.
But when all Fortune's pretty baubles, reft us
By Fate's relentless hands, are crushed and under
Our feet, in fragments overthrown, lie scattered,
And when the heart is in the bosom shattered,
Yea, shattered and transpierced and rent asunder,
An honest peal of laughter still is left us.

.IV.

My brain aye haunting is a legend rare,
And a sweet song doth through the legend flow,
And in the song doth live and float and blow
A gentle little maiden wondrous fair.
Within, a little heart the maid doth bear,
But in the little heart no love doth glow;
For in its loveless, frosty nature show
But haughtiness and pride disdainful there.
Hear'st how the legend through my brain is ringing?
And how the song resounds forlorn and wailing?
And how the maiden her light laugh doth waken?
I fear lest burst my head asunder springing—
And ah! the thought too terrible—lest failing,
My reason from her ancient seat be shaken.

V.

In the still dreamily-sad evening hour,
Long-vanished melodies are round me flitting,
Course down my cheeks the tears unintermitting,
And olden heart-wounds bleed in crimson shower.
And lo! as by a magic mirror's power,
I see the image of my sweet love sitting
All at her work, in bodice red close fitting,
While stillness reigns around her blissful bower.
Then from her seat quick springing doth she sever
From her fair head the loveliest of tresses,
And gives it to me. Fear my joy represses.
Mephisto hath my joy undone for ever,
For of the tress a strong chain doth he wind him,
And drags me round thus many a year behind him.

VI.

"A year ago it was, at our meeting,
Thou did'st not kiss me as in welcome due."
So spake I, and love's mouth of rosiest hue,
Upon my lips pressed kiss of sweetest greeting.
A myrtle sprig she plucked, sweet smiles repeating,
From myrtle-bush that by the window grew:
"Take and this sprig in fresh earth plant anew
And shade with glass."—She spake and signed en-
treating.
The planted sprig soon died. 'Twas long ago.
Herself I have not seen this many a year,
Yet doth the kiss within my memory glow.
Urged lately from afar, I there did stray
Where my love dwelt. Before the house stood near
The live-long night, at morn I strode away.

VII.

Beware, my friend, of fiend's grimaces dire,
Yet worse are gentle smiling angel faces.
One such did tempt me once with sweet embraces,
But felt I her sharp claws as I drew nigh her.
And old black cats, my friend, beware their ire,
Yet worse are white young kittens in some cases.
One such I treasured whilom for her graces,
Yet was my heart much lacerated by her.
O pretty minx ! O rare sweet little maiden !
How could that limpid eye of thine deceive me ?
How could that little paw a heart-wound leave me ?
O rare soft kitten paw with velvet laden !
Would I might press thee to my lips all glowing,
Though from my heart were e'en its life-blood flowing !

VIII.

Thou oft hast seen me war with knaves designing,
Spectacled poodles, cats with paint a glowing,
Who would my very name destroy, and knowing
They sought my ruin by their foul maligning.
Thou sawest how pedants galled me and how
 showing
Their cap and bells fools compassed me combining,
How round my heart were venomous serpents twin-
 ing :
Thou sawest my blood from thousand wounds out-
 flowing.
But thou didst stand unmoved like a tower,
Thy brow a beacon when the storm did lower,
And thy true heart a haven to me surely.
Without that haven raged the tempest's riot,
Few are the barks within that ride in quiet,
But there once anchored we may sleep securely.

IX.

O I would weep and yet I cannot weep,
And I would fain soar boldly heavenward winging,
And yet I cannot: to the base earth clinging,
Where the foul hissing worm-brood round me creep.
And I would fain nigh my own life's light keep,
My sweet-love, o'er her a fond shelter flinging,
My life in her blest fragrant presence bringing,
Yet can I not—rent is my sad heart deep.
Forth from my breaking heart I feel fast flowing
My warm life-blood—I feel my forces failing,
And all things darker are my eyes discerning.
And trembling inwardly I stretch in yearning
Towards that cloud-land where silent shadows sailing
Their yielding arms in love are round me throwing.

Lyrisches Intermezzo.

Prologue.

There once was a knight, mute, worn with woe,
With white wan cheeks a-wearied;
He crept with faltering step and slow,
In sombre musings buried.
So wooden and awkward and clumsy was he,
That the flowers and maidens laughed to see
As he tottering past them hurried.

Oft sat he at home in the darkest nook,
Men's hateful presence mocking,
Out-stretching his arms with yearning look,
His lips in silence locking.
But as the midnight hour ran,
A music strange and song began—
At the door was heard a knocking.

Within his love comes gliding there,
Robed like the sea-foam flying;
She blushes and glows like a rose-bud fair,
O'er her veil bright jewels vying,

Round her slender form doth her gold hair shower,
Her eyes beam forth with strange sweet power,
And they sink intertwinéd lying.

Love-dazed as her form in his clasp he takes,
The wooden knight glows with fire,
The pale face flushes, the dreamer awakes,
The dullard's breast swells higher.
But she banters him archly with mocking grace,
And her gemmed white veil around his face
Is drawn as a mantle by her.

The knight in a palace of crystal straight
Doth a sudden magic render,
And his dazzled eyes doth he wondering sate
With its flashing light and splendour ;
But the fairy clasps him close to her side,
The knight is the bridegroom, the fairy the bride,
The harp play her maidens tender.

They play and they sing so sweet a strain,
Footing a measure gladly,
That the knight can scarce his wits contain,
And he clasps his sweet one madly.
When lo ! on a sudden the lights are gone,
And the knight sits at home again alone
In his dark poet's chamber sadly.

I.

In the fair month of May
 When buds in leaf were breaking,
Within my heart in gladness
 Love leaped to life awaking.

In the fair month of May
 When birds were all a trilling,
With love's laments I wooed her
 That all my soul were filling.

II.

Forth from my tears are sprouting
Of flowers a blooming throng,
And all my sighs transfigured
Are nightingales in song.

And if thou lov'st me, childie,
The flowers for thee I'll bring,
And her lay beneath thy window
The nightingale shall sing.

III.

The rose, the lily, the dove and the sun,
All these of yore my love had won.
I love them no more, for loved by me
Is but one fair, pure, dainty she,
Herself, the fount whence love doth run,
Is rose and lily, dove and sun.

IV.

Whene'er I gaze into thine eye,
Away all pain and sorrow fly;
But when I kiss thy mouth—ah! then
Am I all bright and well again.

When on thy bosom I recline,
Meseems as heavenly bliss were mine;
But when thou whisperest "I love thee!"
Must I alas! weep bitterly.

V.

But late that lovely face so dear,
Did in a dream to me appear,
As meek and pure as angels show,
But yet so pale, so blanched with woe!

Thy lips alone were red and bright,
But Death too quickly kissed them white.
The heavenly light no more did shine,
From those calm modest eyes of thine.

VI.

O lay thy cheek to mine while fall
 Our tears together flowing,
 And to thy heart press mine, that all
 Their flames may mingle glowing !

And when our streaming tears meet,
 Dissolved amid their fire,
 And when my strong arm clasps thee, sweet,
 Shall I with love expire !

VII.

In the bell of the lily breathing
 Shall I pour my soul, while anew
 From its chaliced echoes shall wreathing
 Rise a lay of my own love true.

The music shall tremble and quiver
 As light as the tremulous kiss
 Which to mine did her lips once deliver
 In a rare sweet hour of bliss.

VIII.

The lone stars ever steadfast
Set in the lofty skies,
Through ages long, are gazing
On each other with love-sad eyes.

They speak a wondrous language,
Rich and of sweetest tone,
But none amongst the wisest,
This tongue hath ever known.

But I have caught its accents
And can forget them ne'er ;
And for a grammar served me
My own love's features fair.

IX.

On the wings of song swift flying,
Dear love, shall I waft thee where
By the plains of the Ganges lying,
I know a scene most fair.

There a blushing garden is sleeping
In the still moonlight clear,
And lotus blossoms are keeping
Watch for their sister dear.

The violets laugh in caressing,
And gaze on the starry spheres ;
The roses sweet tales confessing
Breathe soft in each other's ears.

In startled frolic are bounding
The antelopes gentle and shy,
And afar its waves resounding
The sacred stream rolls by.

There shall we wander, sinking
Beneath a palm-tree at rest,
Calm peace and love indrinking,
And dreaming dreams of the blest.

X.

The lotus shrinks retiring
 Before the noonday light,
And with her head all drooping
 Dreamily waits for the night.

The moon, her lover, wakes her
 With a shower of radiance pale,
And gently her face of petals
 Shrouds in a silver veil.

She blooms and glows and shimmers
 And silently gazes above,
Breathes fragrance while tremulous weeping
 With the pangs of a wounded love.

XI.

In Rhine's fair river flowing
 Mirrored within its wave,
 Cologne's vast city glowing
 Its mighty fane doth lave.

In the dome a face sweet-beaming
 On golden vellum glows,
 Which o'er my life's waste streaming,
 A gladsome brightness throws.

Flowers wave and angels hover
 Around the Virgin fair,
 Whose eyes, lips, cheeks discover
 My love's own image there.

XII.

And so thou lov'st not, lov'st not me !
What reck's so light a thing ?
I 'll gaze into thy face and be
As happy as a king.

Thou hatest, hatest me, and this
Thy rosy mouth doth swear it !
Yet hold it, child, for me to kiss
And I 'll contrive to bear it.

XIII.

O swear not, let thy kisses rain,
I hold all women's oaths as vain !
Thy word is sweet, but sweeter far
The kisses stolen from thee are !
These have I, while thy word but bare
And empty vapour is, and air.

Yet swear still as thou list, my own,
I trust thy simple word alone !
Upon thy bosom I 'll recline
And dream that happiness is mine.
Believing, sweet, eternally,
And even longer, thou 'lt love me.

XIV.

Upon my darling's eyes of light
The gayest lyrics I indite,
Upon her little mouth of rose
The finest terzets I compose;
Upon her cheeks that blushing glow,
My noblest stanzas stately flow,
And had my love a heart, then writ
Should a sweet sonnet be on it.

XV.

The world is dull and cannot see
Each day to worse declining,
It speaks, my pretty child, of thee,
Thy character maligning.

The world is dull, it cannot see,
Thy merit undiscerning,
Nor knows how sweet thy kisses be
And all their rapturous burning.

XVI.

Thou to-day shalt tell me, dearest,
Art thou not some pictured dream,
Which when summer days are fairest
From a poet's brain doth teem?

But no,—mouth so rosy ever,
Eyes with magic glow elate,
Child so sweet and lovely, never
Can a poet's mind create.

Basilisks and vampires sable,
Dragons and chimæras dire,
Monsters of romantic fable,
These may wake a poet's fire;

But thee and thy merry fancies,
Features that all sweetness seem,
Such demure yet faithless glances,
Live not in a poet's dream.

XVII.

Beams my love with beauty rarest,
Like the Foam-born in her pride,
Chosen she of all the fairest
To become another's bride.

Heart of mine! to all resigning,
Fret not o'er her broken troth,
Bear it, bear it unrepining
Whatsoe'er the sweet fool doth.

XVIII.

I ne'er shall chide, tho' break my heart in twain,
Love lost for ever! ne'er shall I complain.
Though diamonds lend thee their refulgent light,
No ray doth fall within thy bosom's night.

Of old I knew this—once I dreamt of thee,
And all the night within thy breast did see,
Beheld the serpent that doth gnaw thy heart,
And saw, my love, how desolate thou art.

XIX.

Yes! desolate thou art, and yet I make
 No murmur, love—we both must hapless be!
Till Death our weary hearts together break,
 My love, for ever desolate are we.

I see disdain that round thy mouth doth weave,
 And see thine eyes that flash defiantly,
And see the pride that doth thy bosom heave.
 Yes, desolate thou art—even as I.

Quivers around thy mouth a woe unseen,
 Thy lustrous eyes with hidden tears are wet,
Thy bosom proud a secret woe doth screen,
 My love, we both must aye be desolate.

XX.

Is it then quite from thy memory riven,
How long to my keeping thy heart had been given,
That sweet little heart so false and so wee
That nothing e'er sweeter or falser could be !

Forgotten, too, hast thou the love and the aching
That crushed in its pressure my heart to breaking?
I know not if greater were love or its sting,
I know but how cruelly both could wring.

XXI.

And could the lowly flowers
But know my heart's deep pain,
Their dew's would weep in showers
To heal its wounds again.

The nightingales my sadness
And faintness could they know,
Their pealing notes of gladness
Entrancingly would flow.

The stars in golden splendour,
Could they my woe perceive,
To whisper solace tender
Their airy heights would leave.

But these know naught; my lonely
Sorrow but one doth see,
And she hath rent—she only—
Hath rent my heart in me.

XXII.

Why are all pale the roses seen,
O say, my own love true?
And why where grows the grass so green,
Are mute the violets blue?

Why sings with such a plaintive note
The sky-lark in the air?
And why from out the balsams float
Such death-like odours there?

Why on the mead doth shine the sun
With cold and saddened gloom?
And why is earth itself as wan
And lonesome as the tomb?

And why do I grow faint and pine,
Say, sweet, why may it be?
O say, thou own heart's love of mine,
Why thou forsakest me?

XXIII.

To thee against me inveighing,
 They many a tale did bear ;
 But what on my heart was weighing,
 Ah ! this they told thee ne'er.

With meddlesome zeal they blamed me,
 And shook their heads sadly as grieved,
 The very fiend they named me,
 And thou, hast all believed.

But of all follies the saddest,
 Ah, this have they never known ;
 The wantonest freak and the maddest
 My heart bears in secret alone.

XXIV.

The lindens blossomed, the nightingales sung,
Its smiling rays did the bright sun dart ;
You kissed me, and, round me your arms as you flung,
You pressed me close to your beating heart.

The raven croaked hoarsely the leaves fast fell,
The sun a glance of sad greeting sent ;
And as coldly we bade each other farewell,
Your courtliest curtesy you lowly bent.

XXV.

A mutual tender impression we made,
And yet agreed happily with one another,
And oft at man and wife have we played,
And yet without cuffing and beating each other.
Together we sported with frolic and jest,
And tenderly, too, have we kissed and caressed.
At last hide and seek, when with infantine glee,
In woods and green dells we together were playing,
So well we contrived to conceal us that we
To find ourselves since have been vainly essaying.

XXVI.

And as I delayed and delayed so long,
And wandered and dreamed strange lands among,
The time on my love so heavily weighed
That a wedding gown for herself she made,
And tenderly clasped as a bridegroom admitted,
Of all silly youngsters the most dull-witted.

My love so fair and soft is she,
Her sweet form ever haunteth me,
The violet eyes, the cheek of rose,
Year in, year out, that blooms and glows,—
That I from such a love could sever
Was the silliest thing that did I ever.

XXVII.

The purple violets of her eyes,
Her cheeks where roses strew their dyes,
Her hand that with the lily vies,
These ever bloom, and 'tis alone
The little heart that cold hath grown.

XXVIII.

The world is so fair and the heavens so blue
And with mild warm breath the breezes woo,
And the flowerets wave which the bright meads strew
And sparkle and gleam in the morning dew,
And joyous are all where e'er I view—
But I would fain to the grave be hieing
To lay me where my dead love is lying.

XXIX.

In the north a pine-tree lonely
 On a bleak height doth grow.
 It slumbers ; with white mantle,
 Enshroud it ice and snow.

It dreams of a palm-tree keeping,
 Afar in the morning land,
 Its mute lone watch and drooping
 On a cliff of a burning strand.

XXX.

(The Head speaks.)

O might I but the footstool be
On which my darling's feet do press,
Though stamped she ne'er so hard on me,
No murmur should my lips confess.

(The Heart speaks.)

O might I but the cushion be
In which she thrusts her needles bright,
Though pricked she ne'er so deep in me
I should but in the wound delight.

(The Song speaks.)

And O, if I the paper were
Which she doth round her tresses wreathe,
I'd whisper furtively to her
What doth within me live and breathe.

XXXI.

Since my love away hath gone,
Smiling have I all forsworn,
Slender wits may jest in vain
For I ne'er can smile again.

Now since lost for aye is she,
Weeping, too, forsworn shall be;
Woe may rend my heart in twain,
But I ne'er can weep again.

XXXII.

From my deep sorrow springing
The songlets sweet I waken,
Which on rustling plumes outshaken,
Hie to her bosom winging.

To my darling's heart quick hied they,
But back returned lamenting,
Lamenting yet unconsenting
To tell what there espied they.

XXXIII.

In Sunday garb cits are tripping
Through forest and meadow sweet,
Hallooing, like kidlings skipping,
Fair Nature they blithely greet.

In wide-eyed wonder blinking,
On scenes romantic gaze,
And with long ears indrinking
The sparrows' twittered lays.

But I my window veiling
Drape it in sable array,
While friendly ghosts rise trailing
To pay me a visit by day.

My olden love comes keeping
Tryst from the realms of the dead,
And nestles close to me weeping
Till my heart melts ravished.

XXXIV.

Visions of days forgotten
From the buried past rise slow,
And tell how once beside thee
I lived long long ago.

Through all the streets as dreamily
By day I wandered by,
All wondering gazed the people,
So silent and sad was I.

By night with happier fortune
The streets were empty found,
And I and my shadow together
In silence we roamed around.

With loudly echoing footstep
Over the bridge we passed;
The moon from the clouds forth breaking
A glance demurely cast.

I stood before thy dwelling,
Aloft my glances flung,
And gazed up at thy casement,
And O! my heart was wrung.

I know that thou hast watched me
 Oft from thy window-sill,
 And seen me in the moonlight
 Stand like a statue still.

XXXV.

A youth once loved a maiden
 Whom wayward choice had led
To one whose troth was plighted
 Another bride to wed.

The slighted maiden marries
 The first whom Fate doth bear
Within her way, and o'er it
 The youth is in despair.

It is an olden story
 That told seems new again,
And whom the like befalleth,
 Then breaks his heart in twain.

XXXVI.

As I hear the melody waking
 That sang my true love sweet,
 'Tis as my heart were breaking,
 So wildly doth it beat.

Sped by a desolate longing
 The mountain woods I gain,
 And there my full woes thronging,
 Stream o'er in tears that rain.

XXXVII.

I dreamed of a maid of royal race,
Pale-cheeked and of tearful mien;
We sat entwined in a sweet embrace
Beneath the lindens green.

"I covet not thy father's throne,
Nor his sceptre tho' gold it be,
I covet not his diamond crown,
But thee, love, only thee."

"Nay, nay," she said, "that may not be,
I lie in the grave below,
And at night alone I come to thee
Because I love thee so."

XXXVIII.

One still night, love, together
 In a light skiff sailed we,
 Naught heeding wind or weather,
 Across the boundless sea.

The fairy isles soft sleeping,
 Lay dim in the moon's pale glance,
 And heavenly strains passed sweeping,
 And the clouds swam by in dance.

The strains rose in sweeter wailing,
 The dance wheeled from side to side ;
 But we o'er the waves sped sailing
 Adrift on the waters wide.

XXXIX.

From the legends of bygone years,
 There beckons a snow-white hand,
And a music falls on the ears,
 As from an enchanted land.

Where the giant flowers gaze yearning,
 In the golden evening light,
To each other tenderly turning,
 With bridal faces bright.

Where the voicéd trees are swaying
 In choirs of festal song,
And the echoing fountains playing
 Leap as in dance along.

Where such strains seraphic pealing,
 Ne'er on earthly senses roll,
Till a wondrous rapture stealing,
 Fills all the spell-bound soul !

And O ! would that thither in gladness,
 My joyous heart might flee,
And quit of all earthly sadness
 Might there be blest and free !

Alas ! that land of the morning,
 Tho' oft through my dreams it play,
 With the sunlit gleams of dawning
 It fades into mist away.

XL.

On a bright sunny morning in summer,
Through the gardens' sweet mazes I wound,
The flowers they whispered and murmured,
But silent I wandered around.

They whispered and murmured—the flowers,
And to eye me with pity began ;
“ Nay, be not cross with our sister
Thou pale disconsolate man ! ”

XLI.

In robes of sable splendour,
 My love sheds radiant light,
 Like a legend sad and tender
 Breathed on a summer night.

“In a garden enchanted wander
 Two lovers silent and lone,
 Warble the nightingales yonder,
 Where the tremulous moonlight is strewn.

“The maid like a statue appearing
 Stands, while kneeleth the knight.
 The giant from wilderness nearing,
 The timorous maid takes flight.

“The knight in his blood sinks dying,
 The giant strides home”—ah me !
 When in my grave I am lying
 O'er will the legend be.

XLII.

They plagued me beyond measure
And drove me desperate,
These with all their loving,
And those with all their hate.

They did my bread empoison,
My cup with venom sate,
These with all their loving,
And those with all their hate.

Yet she who o'er all others
Hath plagued me, grieved and moved,
She only ne'er did hate me,
She only ne'er hath loved.

XLIII.

Upon thy cheeks doth summer
 Its rosy flush impart,
 While icy winter lieth
 Within thy little heart.

But soon a change shall follow,
 Thou own sweet love of mine !
 Thy cheeks shall harbour winter,
 In thy heart the summer shine.

XLIV.

When two from each other are parting,
 And clasped is hand in hand,
 They fall to sighs and weeping,
 As if they ne'er would end.

But we—we shed no tears,
 From us no murmur fell,
 The sighs and tears followed
 When we had said farewell !

XLV.

They sat drinking tea while, pathetic,
On love they discoursed much and oft,
The men were serenely æsthetic,
The dames full of sentiments soft.

"True love must be ever platonic,"
The shrivelled court-counsellor cried.
His dame gave a simper ironic,
Then languidly "Ah!" she sighed.

The Canon, mouth open, reflected,
"But love should ne'er violent grow,
Lest the health should be thereby affected."
The Fräulein lisped softly "How so?"

The countess with pensive abstraction
Said, "Love is a passionate crave!"
And then with sweet grace in her action
His cup to the baron she gave.

A place at the table vacated
Was thine, dear, and thou wert not there,
My sweet one, thou wouldst have dilated
On thy love with so charming an air.

XLVI.

Empoisoned are my numbers,—
How could it other be?
For thou hast steeped in venom
The happy life in me.

Empoisoned are my numbers,—
How could it other be?
My heart doth harbour serpents,
Beloved mine—and thee.

XLVII.

My coach is slowly winding
The merry greenwood through,
By smiling vales that witching
The golden sunlight woo.

I sit and muse, and dreaming
Think of my love, when lo !
Three spectres passing greet me
With heads that nodding go.

With strange grimace they caper,
Mockingly and yet shy,
And wind like mists together,
And grin as they vanish by.

XLVIII.

I wept in slumber dreaming
 In the grave that thou wert laid.
 I woke, and flowing tears
 Adown my cheeks slow strayed.

I wept in slumber dreaming
 Thy faithlessness to me.
 I woke, and fell to weeping
 Again more bitterly.

I wept in slumber dreaming,
 Visioned thy truth appears.
 I woke, and still unceasing
 Flowed on my happy tears.

XLIX.

I see thee nightly, in my dream,
A smiling welcome show me,
And I with wail of weeping seem
At thy dear feet to throw me.

Thou gazest with a sad appeal,
Thy fair head softly shaking,
And from thine eyes unbidden steal
The tears like pearl-drops breaking.

Thou dost one soft word breathe alone,
And a cypress wreath lay nigh me.
I wake, and lo! the wreath is gone,
And the word forgotten by me.

L.

Sigh the trees in the winds of autumn,
 Cold and damp the night hath grown,
 Close in my grey cloak mantled,
 I ride through the wood alone.

And as I ride, before me
 My wandering fancies roam,
 And lightly soaring, bear me
 Unto my darling's home.

The hounds bay, and the footmen
 With torch-lights throng around ;
 As I mount the winding staircase
 My clanking spurs resound.

Bright is the tapestried chamber
 Where warmth and fragrance vie,
 There my beloved awaits me,
 And into her arms I fly.

The wind through the trees is sighing,
 The oak to speak doth seem,
 "What will thou, thou foolish horseman,
 With this thy foolish dream?"

LI.

A star adown is falling
From out the glowing sky.
Lo ! 'tis the star of love
That I see shooting by.

Full many a leaf and flower
Fall from the apple-trees,
And with them in wild revel
Disports the frolic breeze.

The swan on the lake is singing,
And calm glides to and fro,
And ever gently warbling
Dips in the flood below.

Now hushed is all and darksome !
Scattered is leaf and flower,
The star hath burst and vanished,
The song of the swan is o'er.

LII.

The Dream-god bore me to a castle tall,
With magic odours warm and lustres gleaming,
And a bright surging wave of men poured all
Adown its labyrinthine chambers streaming.
The pallid crowd the portals seek, and fall
To wailing with writhed hands in anguish seeming.
Maidens and knights appear amid the throng,
And with the press was I, too, thrust along.

But suddenly alone I stood, and lo !
Aghast I mark the crowd now swift receding,
And wander on alone, and haste and go
Through galleries with mazy windings speeding.
My foot as lead, awe in my heart and woe,
Hopeless to gain the passage outward leading.
At length I reach the outer portal, where
I seek to pass. Great Heaven ! who standeth there ?

It was my love that at the door did stand,
Lips wrung with pain, and care her brow was shading,
And as I would have turned she waved her hand,
I know not whether warning or upbraiding.
Then from her eyes there flamed so sweet a brand,
Transpiercingly my heart and brain invading.
So stern, so strange her glance upon me broke,
And yet so lovingly, that I awoke.

LIII.

Night lay upon my eyelids,
Upon my mouth lay lead,
With heart and brain benumbéd,
I slumbered with the dead.

How long I thus lay buried
In trance, I scarce can tell,
I woke—and hark ! a knocking
Upon my grave there fell.

“ The endless day is breaking,
Heinrich, will thou not rise ?
The dead have risen, and dawning
Is the bliss that never dies.”

“ I cannot rise, beloved,
I can no longer see,
For now, for very weeping
Mine eyes have gone from me.”

“ Nay, I will kiss thee Heinrich,
Kiss from thine eyes the night,
And thou shalt see the angels,
And heaven with glory bright.”

“I cannot rise, beloved,
 The blood doth ever flow,
 Where thou with word so bitter
 My heart didst pierce so.”

“My hand so lightly, Heinrich,
 I’ll lay upon thy breast,
 That stayed shall be its bleeding,
 And all its pain at rest.”

“I cannot rise, beloved,
 My head bleeds ever, torn
 By the fatal shot I fired
 When thou from me wert borne.”

“Then with my tresses, Heinrich,
 I’ll stay the wound’s red rain,
 And backwards drive the blood-stream,
 And heal thy head again.”

So soft, so sweet, she pleaded,
 I could no more forbear,
 And fain I would have risen
 To meet my darling there.

Then burst my wounds, and surging
 With a wild rush, there broke
 From head and heart the blood-stream,
 And lo!—I straight awoke!

LIV.

The olden songs and scornful,
Dark dreams that bode despair,
To-day must we inter them ;
A mighty coffin bear.

Therein shall I lay many,
Yet *what* I'll say anon :
The coffin must be huger
Than Heidelberg's great tun.

And bear a funeral bier
Of planks both thick and strong ;
And they must aye be longer
Than Mainz's bridge is long.

And bring twelve giants mightier
Than Christopher, whose shrine
Doth stand within the minster
At Cologne by the Rhine.

The coffin forth shall they carry
And sink 'neath ocean's wave ;
Since for such mighty coffin
Is meet but such a grave.

That it so vast and weighty
Must be, O wist ye why?
'Tis that my love and sorrows
Therein entombed must lie.

Die Heimkehr.

I.

In my life by sorrow darkened
Once a lovely vision rose ;
Since that lovely vision faded,
Night its gloom around me throws.

And as children in the gloaming,
In their minds when terrors throng,
Their unwelcome fears to banish
Raise their voices loud in song.

I, too, but a child and wayward,
Singing in the darkness go ;
And my strain, though jarred its music,
Frees me from my weight of woe.

II.

A sadness its shadow is flinging
 Around me I know not why ;
My haunted memory ringing
 With a lay of the days gone by.

The breeze is cool, it grows darkling,
 And the Rhine doth noiseless run ;
The mountain-summits are sparkling
 In the rays of the evening sun.

High yonder in wondrous seeming,
 Reclines a maiden fair,
Her golden jewels are gleaming,
 And she combs her golden hair.

A comb of gold is she plying
 And warbles a wondrous song,
That a thrilling melody sighing;
 Floats like a spell along.

The boatman his bark while steering,
 Is seized with a wild amaze ;
He heeds not the rocks that are nearing,
 Fixed high is his spell-bound gaze.

And soon by the waters swallowed,
Will bark and boatman lie;
Such fatal charm weaves ever
The song of the Lorelei.

III.

My heart, my heart is weary,
Yet merry May is bright ;
I stand, 'gainst a linden leaning
On the olden bastion's height.

Beneath me in calm silence
The moat's blue water flows ;
A boy from a boat is fishing,
And whistles as he goes.

And far beyond all smiling,
And like bright specks, are seen
Villas and folk and gardens,
Cows, woods, and meadows green.

The maids are bleaching linen,
And dance on the grass around ;
The mill-wheel showers its diamonds,
I can hear its distant sound.

Upon the old gray tower
A sentry-box doth show ;
A scarlet-coated stripling
There paces to and fro.

Now handles he his musket,
That gleams in the sunlight red,
Now he presents and shoulders—
Would he might shoot me dead.

IV.

In the forest weeping I wander,
The throssel sits perched on high,
And hops and sings blithely yonder ;
“ Why art thou sad, prythee, why ? ”

“ Thy little sisters the swallows,
Can tell thee, my child, if they will,
For they nestle in slily-wrought hollows
Beneath my love’s window-sill.”

V.

The night is damp and stormy,
And starless is the sky ;
'Neath the rustling trees of the forest
Silent I wander by.

Afar a faint light flickering
From the hunter's lone cot gleams,
Which yet in vain doth lure me,
Within so drear it seems.

There the blind grandam sitteth,
From her leathern settle ne'er stirred,
Weird and still as a statue,
And speaketh never a word.

Strides to and fro, loud cursing,
The forester's red-headed son,
Laughing with scorn and defiance,
To the wall as he flings his gun.

The fair maid spins and is weeping,
O'er the flax her tears rain,
While at her feet low-whining,
Her father's hound hath lain.

VI.

As I once by chance on my travels
Did my love's family find,
Little sister and father and mother
Received me with welcome kind.

After my health they inquired,
And said as a positive case,
I had not in any way altered,
But was somewhat paler in face.

I asked about aunts and cousins,
And many a wearisome soul,
And after the little puppy
And his bark with its soft low roll.

And after my love that had wedded,
I asked in a casual way,
And they smilingly said her condition
Admitted of little delay.

Cordially joy I wished her,
And murmured with tenderest air,
That my most warm salutations
A thousand times they should bear.

Then broke in the little sister,
 " The soft little puppy of mine
Grew up so big and so savage,
 He had to be drowned in the Rhine."

The child my darling resembles,
 Her own sweet smile hath caught,
Her eyes the very self-same
 That once my ruin wrought.

VII.

We sat in the fisherman's cottage
With glances seaward cast,
And the cloud mists of evening
Towards the sky rose fast.

The lamps within the light-house
Flashed one by one alight,
And in the distant offing
A sail was still in sight.

We spoke of storm and shipwreck,
Of sailors how they fared,
And how 'twixt sky and ocean
Now joy now peril shared.

We spoke of distant regions
To south and north that were,
And of the wondrous peoples,
And wondrous customs there.

'Tis fragrant and bright by the Ganges,
And giant trees uptower,
And noble forms and silent
Kneel to the lotus-flower.

In Lapland are squalid beings,
Flat-skulled, wide-mouthed and small,
Who huddle by the fire baking
Their fish, and grunt and squall.

The maidens breathlessly listened
Till all were hushed at last ;
The sail was seen no longer,
For the shades were deepening fast.

VIII.

Thou lovely fisher-maiden,
Paddle thy bark to land,
Come hither, and nestle beside me,
Caressingly, hand-in-hand.

On my heart thy fair head pillow,
Nor thus affrighted be ;
Dost thou not reckless trust thee
Each day to the raging sea ?

My heart the sea resembles,
Hath storm, and ebb and flow,
And rarest pearls and many
Sleep in its depths below.

IX.

The moon aloft up-risen
Silers the rippling sea ;
My clasp doth my love imprison,
Our hearts swell rapturously.

In the arms of the sweet child lying,
I rest on the lonely strand ;
"Dost list to the wind's loud sighing ?
Why throbs thy snowy hand ?"

"It is not the wind in its sighing,
But sing the mermaids so,
'Tis my sisters' wail far dying,
Whom the sea took long ago."

X.

The evening shades steal gliding,
The clouds o'er the ocean lie,
The whispering waves are chiding,
And the white mists rise high.

The sea-nymph to shore with lightness
Floats from the waves to my side,
With budding charms whose whiteness
Her needless veil would hide.

She clasped me and she pressed me
Till wrung with pain I lay ;
" Too fiercely dost thou caress me,
Thou lovely water-fay ! "

" Within my arms I fold thee,
And clasp thee closer still,
To warm my limbs I hold thee,
The evening hour is chill. "

" The moon from the dun clouds beaming,
Glances with paler ray ;
And thine eye is sadder and streaming,
Thou lovely water-fay ! "

" It saddens not nor is streaming,
 Though it seemeth sad and to swim,
As I rose, o'er the waters gleaming,
 A drop did my eyelids dim."

" The sea-mews shriek plaintive greeting,
 The sea roars and bursts in spray ;—
And thy heart is wildly beating,
 Thou lovely water-fay ! "

" My heart is wildly beating,
 Ne'er wilder its pulses ran,
With speechless love entreating
 But thine, sweet child of man."

XI.

When I before thy dwelling
At break of day go by,
Gladly thy face, sweet little one,
At the window I espy.

With thy dark eyes of hazel
Dost thou me wondering scan :
“ Who art thou, and what ails thee,
Thou strange and woe-worn man ? ”

“ I am a German poet,
Famed in the German land,
And when men name the proudest
Doth mine among them stand.

“ What aileth me, my little one,
Ails many in the German land.
Name men the darkest sorrows,
Doth mine among them stand.

XII.

The broad expanse of ocean shone
As evening's light was closing,
We sat in the fisherman's cottage lone,
Still and alone reposing.

The clouds soared high, the waters swelled,
To and fro the gulls were skimming,
And rising tears that ceaseless welled
Thy love-lit eyes were dimming.

Upon thy hand I saw them fall,
And on my knee low sinking,
From thy white hand the tears all
I caught with rapture drinking.

My body since that hour doth fade,
Desire my soul is killing ;
In me the tears of the hapless maid
A lingering death distilling.

XIII.

Upon the far horizon
Gleams, like a wreathed cloud,
The many-towered city
In evening's twilight shroud.

A humid gust is ruffling
The waters' pathway dark,
And in sad time is rowing
The boatman in my bark.

O'er earth his radiant splendours
The risen sun doth pour,
And the spot shows where from me
My love, for aye, they bore.

XIV.

All hail to thee, thou mighty
Mysterious city fair,
That, lapped within thy precincts,
My darling once did bear !

O say, ye gates and towers,
Where may my darling be ?
To ye did I confide her,
Ye her surety are for me.

Guiltless are aye the towers,
For they could not quit their place,
As my love with coffers and caskets
Fled from the town apace.

But 'twas the gates that let slip
My darling through and were still ;
For a gate, like a fool, is willing
When a fool of a woman will.

XV.

Still is the night, no sounds the streets waken,
And here stands the house that my treasure bore ;
Long hath she now the city forsaken,
But in the same spot is the house as of yore.

There stands a man who upward is gazing
And wringing his hands with o'erpowering woe ;
I start, for my eyes to his features on raising—
Lo ! doth the moon but my own figure show.

Thou counterfeit pale, my semblance wearing !
Why ap'st thou the anguish of love that I,
In this same spot, long suffered despairing,
Full many a night in days gone by ?

XVI.

How canst thou sleep so calmly,
And know that I live still?
For my past wrath returning,
I burst my bonds at will.

Knowest thou the olden story,
How a dead youth of yore,
Unto his grave at midnight
His own beloved bore?

Believe me, thou wondrous beauty,
Child sweet beyond compare,
I live and am more potent
Than all the dead that were!

XVII.

In her chamber the maiden is sleeping,
Peers the moon in with tremulous glance,
While without song and music are ringing
In the melodies soft of a dance.

“ I must up and look from my window,
Who breaketh my rest below.”

There standeth a skeleton weird,
That fiddles and sings to its bow.

“ A dance to me once thou didst promise,
And to break thy word did'st dare;
’Tis a revel to-night in the churchyard,
Come with me and dance we there.”

The maiden was seized with terror,
It charmed her forth from her door;
The skeleton sings and she follows,
As it fiddles and strides before.

It fiddles and leaps and capers,
And rattles its bones with delight,
And its skull goes nidding and nodding,
All weird in the pale moonlight.

XVIII.

Buried in dreamy musing,
I gazed on her image fair,
And the sweet face seemed newly
In life to waken there.

Her parted lips were wreathing
Her own bewitching smile,
And beamed through tears of sadness
The eyes that know not guile.

Then, too, the falling tears
Adown my cheeks did rain,—
Ah! dare I think that never
We two can meet again!

XIX.

I dreamed the moon did sadly shine,
The stars beamed sadly o'er me,
As thither where dwells sweet love of mine,
Many hundred miles they bore me.

And now on the steps of her home I rest,
My kisses the marble cover,
Which oft her dainty foot hath pressed
And her garment's hem swept over.

The night was long, the night was chill,
And cold the marble seeming :
A white form bent from the casement-sill
Beneath the moonlight gleaming.

XX.

What will this lonely tear
That doth my glances chill?
From olden days it lingers
Upon my eye-lids still.

And many a shining sister
It had, now dimmed from sight,
With my past joys and sorrows,
Dissolved in storm and night.

And mist-like, too, have faded
Those azure starlets twin,
Whose laughter wove those sorrows
And joys my heart within.

Alas ! my very love too
Like idle breath hath passed !
Thou time-worn lonely tear,
Now melt thou too, the last !

XXI.

The pale autumnal moonbow
Peeps from the clouds, half-shown
On the quiet parsonage standing
Within the churchyard lone.

The mother reads her Bible,
The son in the light doth gaze,
Drowsily stretches the elder,
While the younger daughter says :

“ Ah me ! the days do o’er me
Pass by so wearily !
It is at a burial only
That there is ought to see.”

The mother says ’twixt her reading,
“ Thou errest—have died but four,
Since was thy father buried
By yonder churchyard door.”

Then yawned the eldest daughter:
“ Here starving shall I ne’er dwell,
I ’ll haste to the Count in the morning,
He is rich and he loves me well.”

The son burst out in laughter ;
 “ At the Star drink huntsmen three,
They win bright gold and will teach me
 Their secret willingly.”

In his lean face the Bible
 Dashes the mother stern :
“ So wilt thou, accursed of heaven,
 Into a highwayman turn ! ”

They hear at the casement a knocking
 And behold a beckoning hand ;
Without stands the dead father
 In his black gown and band.

XXII.

'Tis boisterous weather raging,
It rains and storms and snows ;
I sit at the window gazing
Without as it darksome grows.

There a lonely light is shimmering
That tremulous moves and slow ;
A dame with a lantern feebly
Across the street doth go.

Perchance 'tis eggs and flour
And butter she goeth to buy ;
A cake for her winsome daughter
She thinketh to make, trow I.

While she in her settle sleepily
Lies watching the candle's flare ;
Around her sweet face falling
Her braids of golden hair.

XXIII.

Men think that I am pining,
To love's keen pangs a prey,
And now must I believe it
As readily as they.

Thou soft-eyed little maiden,
How oft do I declare
That the deep love I bear thee
My very heart doth wear.

Yet 'tis in my lone chamber
That thus I speak—for I,
Alas ! am ever silent
When thou art standing by.

For then the wicked angels
Draw nigh my lips to close ;
And ah ! through wicked angels
My life this anguish knows.

XXIV.

Oh! might I once a kiss bestow
Upon that lily finger fair,
I'd press it to my heart while flow
My melting tears in silence there!

Thy liquid eyes of violet hover
Ever round me night and day,
And it plagues me to discover
What those sweet blue riddles say!

XXV.

Hath she never once alluded
To thy love-distracted seeming ?
Couldst thou in her eyes discover
Ne'er a love requited beaming ?

Through her eyes couldst thou then never
To her very soul get at her ?
And thou art, forsooth, no donkey,
Dear friend, in such a matter.

XXVI.

They loved each other, but neither
To the other would love betray ;
Coldness spoke in their glances
While dying for love were they.

They parted at last, and each other
Saw but in dreams now and then ;
'Twas long, long ago they had died, yet
Scarcely themselves knew when.

XXVII.

Man, deride not thou the devil,
Life's short course will soon be run,
And perdition everlasting
Is no idle fable spun.

Man, pay all the debts thou owest,
Long the course of life must run,
And thou must still often borrow,
As till now thou oft hast done.

XXVIII.

Three holy kings there came from the East,
And asked, by each hamlet hieing ;
“ Dear lads and maids, to Bethlehem
The road where find we lying ? ”

The young and the old they knew it not,
And the kings still onward faring,
Followed a golden star that seemed
A joyous radiance wearing.

O'er Joseph's cave the star hung stayed,
And they passed within, low-bending,
With the low of the ox and the Child's sweet wail
Their kingly anthems blending.

XXIX.

My child, when we were children,
Two tiny children gay ;
We crept in the little hen-roost
And hid beneath the hay.

And like the cocks loud crowed we,
As the people passed by the road —
Cock-a-doodle-doo ! and thought they
It was the cocks that crowed.

The bins that lay in the courtyard
Did we with hangings line,
And dwelt therein together
And fashioned a mansion fine.

Our neighbour's ancient tabby
Full oft a visit made ;
We curtsied, bowed, and many
A compliment we paid.

About her health we asked her
In grave and friendly chat ;
We 've said the same since often
To many an ancient cat.

And oft we sat conversing
In old folks' sober way,
Complaining how much better
Things were in our day :

How love and truth and faith were
Effaced from out the earth,
How coffee was so dear,
Of money how such a dearth !—

Past are the games of childhood,
And so pass all in sooth,—
Money, the world, and the ages
And faith and love and truth.

XXX.

My heart is sad with yearning riven,
As I the olden time recall;
The world was then so sweet to live in,
And dwelt in peace the people all.

To pressing want we now must school us,
And all doth such confusion show,
That Providence seems scarce to rule us,
And dead is Lucifer below.

And all so gloomy is around us,
So stern and cold and crossed withal;
Were not a scrap of love just left us
We 'd have no resting-place at all.

XXXI.

As the shimmering moon comes breaking
Through the murky cloud-strewn floor,
So from joyless days, around me
Doth its light a vision pour.

On the deck all seated, sailed we
Down the Rhine in gallant show,
And its grass-green banks of summer
In the evening sun did glow.

Mused I at the feet reclining
Of a fair and winsome dame;
O'er her pale and lovely features
Played the red sun's golden flame.

Lutes were tinkling, youths were singing,
O ! enchanting time of mirth !
When the very heavens seemed bluer
And the soul too wide for earth.

Fairy-like before me flitted
Hill, wood, glade and hamlet by ;
And all, all I saw reflected
In the light of beauty's eye.

XXXII.

In a dream I saw my loved one,
A wan and grief-worn wife,
And faded all and fallen
Was that once blooming life.

On her arm one babe she carried,
By the hand another bore,
And signs of want and sorrow,
Gait, look, and garment wore.

By the market-place she met me,
As she moved with feeble tread,
And gazed at me, while calmly
Yet touched, to her I said :

“ Unto my home come with me,
For thou art worn and pale,
And through my toil and labour
Nor meat nor drink shall fail.

“ And I will tend and cherish
Thy babes that with thee go,
And above all thy dear self,
Thou hapless child of woe !

And ne'er my lips shall utter
That to thee my love I gave,
And when thou diest my tears
Shall kiss thy silent grave.

XXXIII.

Dear friend, what boots it vainly
The old strain to harp for ever?
Wilt thou aye to brood insanely
On the old love-eggs endeavour?

'Tis a cluck for ever uttering!
From the shells the chickens troop them,
And while peeping all and fluttering,
Dost thou in a booklet coop them.

XXXIV.

Be thou only not impatient
 When old notes of anguish waking,
Often still with tones melodious,
 Through my newest songs come breaking.

Stay ! for when this far faint echo
 Of my sorrows fadeth ending,
A new spring of love shall blossom,
 From the healéd heart ascending.

XXXV.

'Tis time that I should wiser be,
 Aside all folly laying ;
Too long with thee in comedy
 Have I a part been playing.

A tableau gay did the scenes unfold,
 In high romantic fashion,
My knightly mantle flashed with gold,
 High thoughts did my soul impassion.

Yet now as I more soberly
 End all this farce distracting,
I feel as wretched as though I
 Still comedy were acting.

Ah me ! to all I felt, in jest
 My thoughtless speech turned traitor :
I played with death within my breast,
 The dying gladiator.

.XXXVI.

Heart of mine ! O grieve no more !
Bear the burden Fate hath left thee,
And of what the winter reft thee
Spring again shall all restore !

And how much, too, still is thine !
Fair the world is, and delighting,
And all—all thy love inviting,
Thou canst love, O heart of mine !

XXXVII.

Thou seemest like a flower,
Pure, sweet, and fair to be,
And as I gaze a sadness
Steals o'er my heart for thee.

Methinks my hands should linger
Upon thy head in prayer,
That God may ever keep thee
Thus pure and sweet and fair.

XXXVIII.

Child ! nay, 'twould be thy undoing,
And I strive with might and main
That thy little heart shall never
Glow for me in love again.

But, that I succeed too lightly,
Fills me with a keen regret,
Still the frequent thought renewing,
Would that thou didst love me yet.

XXXIX.

When on my couch reposing,
Shrouded in down and night,
A sweet, fond, winning image
Floats softly in my sight.

Scarce doth the hushing stillness
Mine eyes in slumber seal,
Again that image lightly
Within my dream doth steal.

Yet with the morning visions
It fadeth not away,
For in my heart I bear it
Throughout the live-long day.

XL.

Maiden with the mouth of roses,
And that eye so sweet and clear,
Thou, my darling little maiden,
In my thoughts art ever here.

Long are now the winter evenings,
And I would that I were nigh thee,
In a cosy little chamber
Prattling with and seated by thee.

That white dainty hand the pressure
Of my fervent lips should woo,
And my happy tears in falling
That white dainty hand bedew.

XLI.

Though in gathering flakes 'tis snowing,
Hail and storm without loud blowing
My jarred window-panes are straining,
Ne'er shall I be found complaining,
For within my heart I bear
Springtide and love's image fair.

XLII.

Did not my visage wan betray
The secret love I bore thee?
And must the proud lips too entreat
In suppliant prayer before thee?

Too haughty they, their joy alone
In kiss and laughter taking,
They fling perchance a jest the while
My heart beneath is breaking.

XLIII.

Dear friend, thou art in love,
And strange pangs themselves are showing ;
But the gloomier gets thy head,
Is thy heart e'er clearer growing.

Dear friend, thou art in love,
And alone art undiscerning,
For thy heart's flame I behold
Even through thy waistcoat burning.

XLIV.

At rest to linger by thee,
To thy dear side I flew :
But thou away must hie thee,
Thou hadst so much to do.

I vowed, save thee hereafter,
My soul no love should know,
But with full-throated laughter
Thou madst me a curtesy low.

Nay, still more hast thou tried me
Than all my sorrows past,
For thou hast e'en denied me
A parting kiss at last.

Tho' things thus ill may meet one,
I'll harm me not, be sure !
For all all this, my sweet one,
Befell me once before.

XLV.

Twin sapphires are thine azure eyes
 With love and sweetness beaming;
And O, thrice happy man on whom
 Their love-light shimmers streaming.

Thy heart it is a diamond,
 A dazzling radiance throwing;
And O, thrice happy man that shares
 The love within it glowing.

Thy lips two matchless rubies are,
 Eye lovelier ne'er beholding;
And O, thrice happy man to whom
 Their love they breathe unfolding.

Oh, knew I but the man so blest,
 And found him unattended
Beneath the green-wood lone, I ween
 His bliss should soon be ended.

XLVI.

With love-winning words I bound me
Closely fettered to thy breast;
Now, with my own meshes round me,
Into earnest turns my jest.

But since thou dost justly fly me,
Laughing in thy turn and freed,
Draw the powers of darkness nigh me,
And I shoot myself indeed.

XLVII.

Life's too fragmentary, and the world round it--
I must to a German professor propound it,
Who knows how to patch life together, though battered,
 And can to a scheme philosophic give birth ;
For with his old night-caps and night-gown all tattered
 He stops up the rents in the frame of the earth.

XLVIII.

With pondering long and much reflection
Day and night was my head distraught,
Till those sweet eyes of thine, love winning,
Resolve to my wavering spirit brought.

Now shall I stay where thine eyes do lighten,
Whose lustre sweet hath an archness caught—
And yet that again would love possess me,
This could I never more have thought.

XLIX.

This eve is beauty gathered,
The house with brightness glows,
And o'er the window yonder
A form its shadow throws.

Thou seest me not in the darkness,
As beneath I stand apart;
And e'en still less thou seest
Within my joyless heart.

My joyless heart that loves thee,
Loves and yet breaks for thee!
It breaks and bleeds and quivers,
But this thou dost not see.

L.

I would that my love and its sadness
Might a single word convey,
The joyous breezes should bear it,
And merrily waft it away.

They should waft it to thee, beloved,
This soft and wailful word,
At every hour thou shouldst hear it,
Where'er thou art 'twould be heard.

And when in the night's first slumber
Thine eyes scarce closing seem,
Still should my word pursue thee
Into thy deepest dream.

LI.

Diamonds and pearls are thy dower,
And all on which mortals set store,
And thou hast eyes of the fairest—
My darling, what wouldst thou more?

And to thine eyes in their sweetness
My muse doth incessant outpour
Their praises in numbers immortal—
My darling, what wouldst thou more?

With the shaft of their sunniest glances
Thou hast smitten my heart to its core.
And driven me quite to distraction—
My darling, what wouldst thou more?

LII.

This good youth so sympathetic
One can scarce enough revere,
Oft with oysters he regales me
And Rhine's luscious vintage clear.

Neatly fit him hose and doublet,
Neater is the tie he dresses,
And so comes he every morning
Asking how my health progresses :

Dwells upon my world-wide glory,
My urbaneness and wit's dower,
Prompt and busy e'er to do me
Every service in his power.

And at night in social gatherings,
With rhapsodic mien rehearses
To the ladies there assembled
All my own divinest verses.

Oh, how really delightful
Such a youth it is in knowing,
Now in our time when daily
All good things are scarcer growing.

LIII.

From lovely lips far banished and forth driven,
 From lovely arms entwined around me clinging !
Yet one day more would I have lingered even,
 When drew the post-boy nigh, his horses bringing.

But such is life, child, one prolonged complaining,
 Endless farewells, eternal separation !
Could not thy heart hold mine with fond enchaining,
 Nor e'en detain me thine eyes' fascination ?

LIV.

We drove along in the gloomy
Post-waggon the live-long night,
Heart upon heart close nestled,
And jested and laughed with delight.

Yet with the dawn of the morning,
My child, how astounded we were
To find Love sitting between us,
A passenger shirking his fare.

LV.

Heaven knows where the young madcap
Maiden hath a lodging found !
Swearing, through the pouring shower
Race I all the town around.

From one inn impetuous hastening
To another off I hie,
And to every boorish waiter
Turned, alas ! in vain, have I.

There I see her at a casement,
And she nods and laughs as well,
Could I know that thou didst live in,
Maiden, such a grand hotel ?

LVI.

Like gloomy dreams are standing
The houses in long-drawn row ;
Close in my mantle shrouded,
Silently past I go.

From the cathedral tower
Twelve slow reverberates,
And with her caresses and kisses,
My darling for me waits.

The moon my steps is guiding
And her friendly light she flings,
And now as I reach her dwelling
My joyful voice loud rings.

I thank thee my olden comrade
That thou o'er my path hast shone ;
And now a farewell I bid thee,
The rest of the world shine on !

And if thou findest a lover
Who lone o'er his sorrows doth sigh,
Console him as thou, too, hast often
Consoled me in days gone by.

LVII.

When thou shalt be my wedded wife,
And envied without measure,
In pastime shall glide by thy life,
One round of joy and pleasure.

And if thou frown and if thou chide,
Still shall I murmur never ;
But if my verses thou deride,
We say farewe'll for ever.

LVIII.

Upon thy snow-white shoulder
My head doth drooping lie,
And hears while furtive listening
For what thy heart doth sigh.

The blue hussars come clattering
Through the gate, and the trumpets bray,
To-morrow my heart's beloved
Leaves me at break of day.

And wilt thou at morn thus leave me?
To-day thou shalt give to me,
And in thy fair arms folded,
My bliss shall doubled be.

LIX.

The blue hussars ride trumpeting
Out through the gate away ;
Now come I, sweet, and bring thee
A cluster of roses gay.

Oh ! 'twas a rare wild riot !
A plague of a dragoonade ;
Within thy little heart even
Some had their quarters made.

LX.

In youth's by-gone years wasted
Many a bitter pang I've tasted,

From love's ardent glow.

The fuel is too dear—the fire
Of itself doth soon expire :

Ma foi ! tis better so.

Then, bethink thee, maiden dear,
Chase away the idle tear,

And love's fond alarms.

Is life left thee ere its setting?

Come, the olden love forgetting,

Ma foi ! within my arms.

LXI.

Dost thou really, then, so hate me?

Art thou really changed so sadly?

To the world must I complain, then,

That thou treatest me so badly?

O ye lips, ungrateful ever,

Say what is it hath possessed you,

To decry the man so loving

Who in happier days hath pressed you?

LXII.

Again the loving eyes are on me
Which of yore for me did brighten,
And the lips now bloom before me
That did life with sweetness lighten.

And again I hear the music
Of the voice I heard so gladly ;
'Tis but I that, home returning,
Have thus changed alone so sadly.

In those beauteous arms and snowy,
That so fast and loving bind me,
On her heart though pillowed do I
Listless and unheeding find me.

LXIII.

Thou hast understood me rarely,
 'Twas rare I caught thy drift aright;
But when both in the mud stuck fairly,
 We understood each other quite.

LXIV.

Over Salamanca's ramparts
Soft refreshing winds are blowing ;
There I stroll with my sweet donna,
For a summer ramble going.

Round the shapely form of Beauty
My entwining arm is stealing,
And my happy hand the beating
Of her throbbing heart is feeling.

But a dark foreboding whisper
Through the linden trees is swelling,
And, beneath, the gloomy mill-stream
Is its dreams of horror telling.

Ah, señora, a misgiving
Warns me I from thee must sever,
And on Salamanca's ramparts
We again shall ramble never.

LXV.

Near me dwelleth Don Henriquez,
Called "the handsome" in addition;
Neighbouring are our chambers,
Parted by a thin partition.

Flush the dames of Salamanca
As he strides the streets descending,
Clinking spurs, moustachios twirling,
And his faithful hounds attending.

But in evening's silent hour,
All alone at home when sitting,
In his hands doth his guitar lie,
Sweet dreams o'er his spirit fitting.

Tremblingly the strings he touches,
Some strange phantasy beginning,
Ah, like caterwauling, plagues me
All his strumming and his dinning.

LXVI.

In thy eyes and thy voice, as we first saw each other,
I marked a devotion too clear to be missed,
And had there not stood by thy troublesome mother,
I think then and there we must surely have kissed.

I left the dear town as the morning was breaking
To haste on the round of my rambles anew ;
And there at the window my fair maid lurked waking,
And I wafted aloft a last loving adieu.

LXVII.

Over the mountains the sun rises bright,
The lambkins in flocks tinkle far o'er the glen,
My darling, my lambkin, my sun, my delight,
How glad would I be might I see thee again !

Aloft my wistfullest glances are roving,
" Farewell, my child, I must wander from thee ! "
In vain ! for never a curtain is moving,
She lies still and sleeps—is she dreaming of me ?

LXVIII.

The summer evening's haze lies spreading
Over wood and verdant meadow ;
The golden moon i' the azure heaven
Streams adown, a fragrance shedding.

The cricket chirps by the brook with shrillness,
And a rippling stirs the water,
And the rambler hears a splashing
And a breathing in the stillness.

By the brook alone and darkling
Is the lovely fairy bathing ;
Arm and neck all sweet and snowy
Are beneath the moonlight sparkling.

LXIX.

O'er wild tracks the night is lowering,—
Weary limbs and heart of woe;—
Ah! like silent blessings showering,
Streams, sweet moon, thy light below.

Sweet moon, with thy glory brightly
Thou dost scare the night's grim fears;
All my pangs dissolving lightly,
And my eyes are dewed with tears.

LXX.

Death is but refreshing night,
Life it is a sultry day.
Dusk it grows, and slumber woos me,
Wearied with day's fading light.

O'er my couch a tree grows near,
Where warbles a young nightingale,
Love's ecstatic carols raining,
Which as in a dream I hear.

LXXI.

Say, where is thy queen of beauty,
Sung by thee in bygone hour,
When love's spell-enkindled fires
Pierced thy heart with wondrous power?

Ah ! those flames are quenched for ever,
And my heart is chilled and sighing,
And as in an urn these pages
Hold enshrined love's ashes lying.

Götterdämmerung.

Now May hath come with all her golden splendours,
Her silken breezes and her fragrant balm,
And sweetly lures us with her snowy flowers,
And greets us from a thousand blue-eyed violets,
And spreads a carpet blossom-flecked of green,
With sunshine interweaved and morning dew,
And summons to her side earth's children dear.
The simple folk at the first call obey ;
The men disport themselves in nankin hose
And Sunday coats with golden buttons bright ;
The women robed in white of innocence ;
Youths their newly-sprung moustachios twirl,
And maidens move in all their budding charms ;
The poets of the town their pockets fill
With paper, pencil, and lorgnette ; and joyous
Press on towards the gate the motley crowd
And fling themselves without upon the sward,
Wondering how the trees so briskly grow,
Play with the many-hued and tender flowers,
List to the carol of the merry birds,
And shout exulting up to Heaven's blue vault.

To me, too, May advanced. She tapped three times

Upon my door, exclaiming, "I am May,
Thou pale-faced dreamer, come, for I must kiss thee."
I held my door close-fastened, and cried out :
"In vain thou courtest me, thou graceless visitor,
For I have fathomed thee, and I have probed
The fabric of the world, and seen too much
And far too deep, and vanished are all joys,
And pangs eternal throng into my heart.
I see within the hard and stony shells
Of human dwellings and of human hearts,
And see in both but guile and fraud and misery.
Upon their features can I read their thoughts
More hateful. In the maiden's modest blush
I see the secret tremor of desire ;
Upon the proud enraptured head of youth
I see the gay and laughing cap and bells ;
And mockeries alone and sickly shadows
I see upon this earth, and I know not
If it be Bedlam or a lazar-house.
I see within the crust of the old earth
As t'were of crystal, and behold the terrors
That with her joyous verdure to conceal
May strives in vain. I do behold the dead ;
They lie below within their narrow coffins,
The hands are folded and the eyes do stare,
Ghastly their faces and their raiment ghastly,
And through the lips there crawl the yellow worms.

I see the son that with his lass doth sit
For pastime down upon his father's grave ;
The nightingales sing mocking carols round,
The tender meadow-blossoms laugh in scorn,
E'en the dead father stirs within his grave,
And anguish-stricken thrills old mother Earth.

“Thou, poor Earth, thy sorrows well I know !
I see the fire within thy bosom raging,
And see thee bleed in all thy thousand veins,
And see thy gaping wounds asunder rent,
And wild out-streaming flames and fume and blood.
Thy giant sons defiant I behold,
Primeval brood, from dark abysses surging,
And whirling fiery torches in their hands ;
Their iron scaling-ladders they advance,
And wild they storm the citadel of Heaven,
And sable dwarfs climb after them, and crashing
Vanish yonder all the golden stars.
With daring hand they rend the golden veil
Before the Court of God, and shrieking fall
On prostrate faces the angelic legions,
And nearer onward press the raging crowd.
The giants hurl afar their lurid torches
In the wild realm of Heaven. Smite the dwarfs
With flame-wrought scourges the angelic shoulders

Which writhe and crouch beneath for very anguish.
And mine own guardian-angel there I see,
With his fair flowing locks and features sweet,
And with eternal love around his mouth
And heavenly bliss within his eyes of blue.
And a forbidding hideous sable goblin
Uplifts him from the ground, my blanchéd angel,
And leers grinning on his noble limbs,
And clasps him fast around within his grasp,—
And piercing runs a cry throughout the universe,
The pillars totter, Earth and Heaven together
In ruins fall, and night primeval reigns.”

Ratcliff.

The dream-god carried me unto a landscape,
Where weeping willows waved to me a welcome
With their long arms of green, and where the flowers
Gazed on me calmly with arch sisterly eyes,
Where twitter of birds did sound familiarly,
Where e'en the dogs' bay seemed as known to me,
And voices, too, and forms did greeting proffer,
As to a friend of old, and yet where all
Did seem so strange to me, so wondrous strange.
Before a trim and rustic house I stood,
My bosom agitated, but my brain
Was calm, and calmly did I shake aside
The dust from off my garments travel-stained.
The bell rang shrilly and the door flew wide.
Within were men and women, long-familiar
Faces. A silent sorrow lay on all,
And care suppressed and hidden. Strangely troubled,
With looks of sympathy they gazed on me,
That through my very soul a shudder ran,
As presaging calamity unknown.
Old Margaret I recognised at once ;
I scanned her pryingly, but she spake not.
"Where is Marie?" I asked ; yet she spake not,
But softly took my hand and led me on

Through many chambers long and glittering,
Where reigned state, pomp, and stillness as of death,
And guided me at length to a dim chamber,
And with averted visage did she point
Unto a form that on a couch reclined.
“Are you Marie?” I questioned. Inwardly
Was I myself astounded at the firmness
With which I spoke. And stony and metallic
A voice rang jarringly: “So people call me.”
A cutting pang shot through me at the word,
For could that cold and hollow tone then be
The once so sweet attuned voice of Marie!
And that same form in faded lilac robe,
Carelessly thrown on and loosely zoned,
With rigid eyes and glassy, and the cheeks
Relaxed in roundness of the face so wan—
Ah! could she be the once so beautiful,
The blooming, sweet, adorable Marie!
“Long have your travels been,” she said aloud,
With cold and strange familiarity;
“You seem not quite so slim, my dear friend,
You are in health and sturdy reins and limbs
Betoken lustiness.” A gentle smile
Stole breaking round the sickly pallid mouth.
In my bewilderment the words broke from me:
“I have been told of late that you have wedded!”
“Ah yes!” she said, with careless laugh and loud,

“I have a block of wood that is encased
With leather, called a husband ; yet is wood
But wood ! ” and laughed with jangling dissonance,
Till a cold horror through my soul did run,
And the doubt seized me—can this be the modest,
The flower-like purity of the lips of Marie !
Then rose she up erect, and quickly seized
Her cashmere from the seat, and throwing it
Around her neck she clung unto my arm,
And drew me thence beyond the open door,
And led me forth through field and copse and
meadow.

The glowing ruddy sun’s suspended orb
Hung low, and shed around its crimson rays
Upon the trees and flowers, and the stream
That did afar majestically glide.

“Dost see the mighty golden eye that swims
In the blue water ? ” quickly cried Marie.

“Hush, hapless creature ! ” breathed I, and beheld
A wondrous movement in the twilight dim.
Cloud-forms of mist arose from out the fields,
And interlaced their soft and snowy arms !
The violets eyed each other sweetly, love-sick
The chaliced lilies towards each other bent ;
The roses all were fired with fervid rapture ;
Carnations fain into a breath would kindle,
And every flower in happy fragrance revelled,

And all in weeping shed still tears of joy,
And jubilantly hymning : " Love ! Love ! Love ! "
Fluttered the butterflies, the luminous
Golden beetle hummed his faery lays,
The evening breezes whispered soft and rustled
The oaks, the nightingale sang meltingly,
And all atween the whispering, rustling, singing,
Low babbled with metallic cold dull voice,
The faded form that to my arm did cling.
" I know thy nightly doings at the castle,
And the long shadow is a worthy creature,
He nods and becks to all as one doth will ;
The Bluecoat is an angel ; but the Red
With the drawn sword is deadly hostile to you."
And in such wondrous wildering discourse
She babbled in a breath, and then did sit
Wearied with me upon a bank of moss
That lay beneath an old ancestral oak.

There we reclined together still and sad,
And ever sadder gazed we on each other.
The oaks did rustle as the dying sigh,
And sang the nightingales with deepest melancholy.
Yet ruddy sunbeams, glancing through the leaves,
Around Marie's wan features sparkling played,
And lured a glow from out her fixed eyes,

And in the old sweet accents did she say :
“ How knewest thou that I am so unhappy ? ”
“ I read it but of late in thy wild numbers.”

An icy shudder pierced my breast, I trembled
At my own reason's frenzy which beheld
The future ; shot through all my brain a gloom,
And, in sheer consternation, I awoke.

LXXIV.

In the garden roamed at even,
Listless, the Alcaid's daughter,
While the clash of drums and clarions
From the castle pealed exulting.

“ Weary are to me the dances,
And the honied adulation,
And the knights who all so courteous
With the sun in heaven compare me.

“ Wearier still to me is all since
Saw I in the streaming moonlight
A young knight whose lute melodious
Lures me to my window nightly.

“ There he stood so lithe and gallant,
And his eyes their lightnings flashing
From his pale and noble visage,
A St. George in truth resembling.”

Thus in meditation gazing
On the ground was Donna Clara ;
As she looked up, in his beauty
Stood the unknown knight before her.

Hand in hand with loving whispers
Wander they beneath the moonlight,
And the zephyr wafts a welcome,
Faery-like the roses greet them.

Faery-like the roses greet them,
Like love's messengers a blushing,—
“But pray tell me, my beloved,
Why hast thou so sudden crimsoned?”

“’Twas the midges stung me dearest,
And the midges are in summer,
As abhorred by me, as were they
Long-nosed Israelitish rabble.”

“Leave the Israelites and midges,”
Said the knight, with soft caressing ;
From the almond-trees were falling
Thousand snowy flakes of blossom.

Thousand snowy flakes of blossom
Were their luscious fragrance shedding,
“But pray tell me, my beloved,
Is thine heart, then, mine entirely?”

Bathed in light the snowy lilies
To the stars above are gazing ;
“But pray tell me, my beloved,
Hast thou, then, not falsely sworn it?”

"Falsehood is not in me, dearest,
As within my heart there flows not
One sole drop of blood of Moors
Nor of Israel's sordid people."

"Leave the Israelites and Moors,"
Said the knight with fond caressing,
As towards a myrtle bower
Led he the Alcaid's daughter.

With love's subtly woven meshes
Hath he secretly entwined her !
Brief words, but long lingering kisses,
And their hearts are overflowing.

Sweet the bridal song and melting
Which the nightingale fond warbles,
While as in a dance of flambeaux
Frolic fire-flies around them.

Still grows the silent bower,
And alone is heard the stealthy
Whisper of the listening myrtles
And the breathing of the flowers.

Suddenly the drums and clarions
Echo loudly from the castle,
And, up-springing, Donna Clara
From the knight's embrace withdrew her.

“ List ! that calls me thither, dearest ;
Yet, before we part asunder,
Thou thy dear name must tell me,
Which thou long from me hast hidden.”

And the knight with merry laughter
Kissed the finger of his lady,
Lightly kissed her lips and forehead,
And these words at length he uttered :

“ I, Señora, your belovéd,
Am the son of the renownéd
Great and learned scribe, the Rabbi
Israel of Saragossa.”

LXXV.

1.

In the Duomo of Cordova
There are columns thirteen hundred,
Thirteen hundred giant columns
Bear the cupola stupendous.

And the dome and walls and columns
Bear inscribed from base to summit
The Korán's Arabian cipher,
Deft and flowery interwoven.

Moorish kings did whilom fashion
This high fane to Allah's glory,
But hath much been interverted
In the dark whirl of the ages.

On the turrets, where the warders
Unto prayer were wont to summon,
Are the Christian bells intoning
With a melancholy clangour.

In the Duomo of Cordova
Stands Almansor ben Abdullah,
Gazing calmly on the columns,
And these bated words he murmured :

“ O ye columns, strong and mighty,
Once adorned to Allah’s glory,
Now must ye do lowly homage
To this Christendom abhorrent !

“ Ye conform ye with the ages,
And ye bear your load in patience ;
So then surely must the weaker
Be more easily submissive.”

And his head, with beaming visage,
Bent Almansor ben Abdullah
O’er the goodly font baptismal
In the Duomo of Cordova.

2.

Swiftly strode he from the Duomo,
Galloped forth on his wild courser,
While upon the breeze his dewy
Locks and helmet’s plume were dancing.

On the road to Alcolea,
All adown the Guadalquiver,
Where the snowy almonds blossom,
And the fragrant golden orange :

Thither spurs the knight light-hearted,
Sings and whistles and laughs gaily,
With the warbling birds in chorus,
And the stream's resounding waters.

Within Alcolea's castle
Dwelleth Clara de Alvares,
In Navarre her sire is warring,
And in light restraint she revels.

From afar now hears Almansor
Drums and clarions resounding,
And the castle lights beholds he
Glancing through the shady forest.

Within Alcolea's castle
Dance twelve gay-apparelled ladies,
Dance twelve knights in gay apparel,
But most deftly moves Almansor.

As if winged by joyous humour,
All around the hall he flutters,
And to every dame well knoweth
Sweetest flatteries to whisper.

The fair hands of Isabella
Lightly kisses he, and springs thence ;
And he sits him by Elvira,
And her face scans debonnairly.

-

Laughing asks he Leonora
If to-day her favour wins he ?
And his golden cross discovers
Richly broidered on his mantle.

To each lady he protesteth
That within his heart he bears her ;
“ As I am a Christian,” swore he
Thirty times upon that evening.

3.

Within Alcolea's castle
Fled is all the mirth and music,
Vanished have the knights and ladies,
And the lights are all extinguished.

Donna Clara and Almansor
In the hall unheeded linger,
While one solitary lustre
Over both its glimmer showers.

On a settle sits the lady,
And the knight sits on a footstool,
And his head with slumber weary
On the dear knees reposes.

Rose-oil from a golden flasket
Pours the lady, pensive musing,
On the brown locks of Almansor—
And deep from his heart he sigheth.

Sweetest kiss with mouth of softness
Pressed the lady, pensive musing,
On the brown locks of Almansor—
And his brow with gloom is clouded.

Flow of tears from eyes resplendent
Weeps the lady, pensive musing,
On the brown locks of Almansor—
And his lips convulsive quiver.

And he dreameth : again stands he,
With head lowly bent, and tearful,
In the Duomo of Cordova
And he lists to sullen voices.

All the lofty giant columns
Hears he murmur in fell anger,
Longer can they not endure it,
And they totter and they tremble.

And they wildly reel together,
And all pale grow priests and people ;
Crashing falls the dome down headlong,
And the Christian gods shriek wailing.

LXXVI.

1.

At her window stands the mother,
The son on his pallet lies,
" See the procession passes,
Haste, Wilhelm, haste and rise ! "

" I am faint and weary, mother,
Nought see I, and nought hear ;
My aching heart broods ever
O'er my dead Gretchen dear."

" Arise ! we 'll hie to Kevlaar
With beads and book depart,
And there God's holy Mother
Shall heal thy aching heart."

The hallowed banners flutter,
The solemn chants rise high,
As through Cologne moves slowly
The long procession by.

In the crowd her son slow leading
The mother follows now,
And they swell the pealing chorus
" Mary ! Blessed be thou ! "

2.

At Kevlaar the Virgin Mother
Stands robed in rich array,
For the sick and the lame come thronging,
Whom she must heal to-day.

At her shrine the maiméd sufferers
With votive offerings stand,
Wrought limbs of wax, and many
A waxen foot and hand.

A waxen hand who offers,
Of his own shall heal the sore,
And a waxen foot shall straightway
A foot to health restore.

To Kevlaar went many on crutches
That now on a rope can bound,
And many now sweep the viol
That there had no finger sound.

A heart from a waxen taper
The mother fashions fair :
"This bear to the Holy Virgin,
And she shall soothe thy care."

Her son the heart took, sighing,
Sighing to the shrine drew nigh,
The words from his full heart streaming,
While streamed the tears from his eye.

“Thou blest above all women,
“God’s Virgin Mother dear!
Thou glorious Queen of Heaven,
My prayer benignly hear!

“There dwelt I with my mother,
Where stately Cologne lies,
The town where a hundred altars
And many a temple rise.

“And near us dwelt my Gretchen,
But she sleeps ’neath the cold grave-stone:
Mary, this heart I bring thee,
Heal thou what breaks my own!

“Heal thou its wasting languor
And early and late I vow
Shall rise my fervent anthems,
Mary, blessed be thou!”

8.

The drooping son and the mother
In a chamber still repose,
When lo ! within soft gliding,
The Virgin Mother goes.

Then lowly o'er the sufferer
She bent her as he lay,
On his heart her hand placed lightly,
Smiled sweet, and passed away.

Thus dreamed the mother while ever
Strange scenes in her vision crowd ;
She started awake from slumber,
For the dogs were baying loud.

In the sleep that knows no waking
Out-stretched her dead son lay,
O'er his bloodless cheeks light playing
The crimson flush of day.

With folded hands the mother
Gazed stricken, she knew not how.
In a low wail breathed she meekly,
" Mary, blessed be thou ! "

Aus der Harzreise.

1824.

Prologue.

Black surtouts and silken stockings,
 White and courtly ruffles in them,
 Speech so smooth, and such embracing,—
 Oh ! had they but hearts within them.

Hearts and love within their bosoms,
 Warm love in their bosoms burning—
 Oh ! it kills me—all their canting,
 Hypocritical love-yearning

Up the mountains will I hie me
 Where the quiet huts are showing,
 Where the breast may open freely,
 And the breezes free are blowing.

Up the mountains will I hie me,
Where the gloomy pines are roaring,
Torrents rush and birds are singing,
And the haughty clouds are soaring.

Fare ye well, ye polished chambers,
Silken gallants, dames of fashion !
Up the mountains will I hie me,
And smile on you with compassion.

Berg-Idylle.

I.

In the cottage on the mountain
Dwells the aged mountaineer ;
There the dark green pines are rustling,
And the golden moon shines clear.

In the cottage stands a settle,
Carved with wondrous art, and high ;
Happy he who there reclineth,
And that happy one am I !

On a footstool doth the maiden
Leaning on my lap repose ;
Eyes twin stars of azure seeming,
And her mouth a crimson rose.

And from those sweet eyes of azure
Heavenly lustre on me glows,
And she lays her lily finger
Archly on the crimson rose.

No, she sees us not, the mother
Plying her busy wheel amain,
And the father strikes the zither,
And he sings the olden strain.

And the little one soft whispers,
Soft her bated accents steal ;
For full many a weighty secret
Doth she oft to me reveal.

“ Since the aunt is dead, we cannot
Now, of course, again repair
To the shooting-court at Goslar,
And it is too lovely there !

“ While 'tis here so very lonely
On the cold hill-tops you know,
And in winter we are wholly
As if buried in the snow.

“ And I am a timid maiden,
Like a child I quake with fright
At the wicked mountain-goblins
Who so busy are at night.”

Sudden ceased the little maiden,
At her prattle as dismayed,
And her tiny hands together
On her little eyes she laid.

And the pines without roar louder,
Drones the wheel with whirring fly,
And between the zither tinkles
With the olden melody.

Fear thee not, sweet little maiden,
At the wicked goblins' might,
Watch o'er thee, sweet little maiden,
Keep the angels day and night.

2.

Pine trees with their dark green fingers
Tap the little casement in,
And the moon, the stealthy listener,
Flings her golden light within.

Father, mother, snore all lightly
In the little bedroom by ;
While we keep awake together
Prattling sweetly—she and I.

“ Hard 'twould be for me to credit
That thou breathest oft a prayer,
For thy lips' convulsive movement
Doth not come from praying there.

“ That cold wicked sneer that ever
Fills me with a strange affright,
But my gloomy fear is tempered
By thine eyes' unruffled light.

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“ He hath wrought the greatest wonders,
And works greater yet than erst ;
He hath smote the tyrant's strongholds,
And the yoke of serfdom burst.

“ Ancient death wounds he assuageth,
Doth the ancient right replace ;
All mankind, in birth co-equal,
Form alike one noble race.

“ He doth drive the mists of evil
And the phantom dire away,
That disturbs our love and gladness,
Gibes and flouts us night and day.

“ Thousand knights encased in armour
Hath the Holy Ghost inspired,
To fulfil His holy pleasure,
And their souls with ardour fired.

“ Flash their trusty swords like lightning,
Wave their banners' sacred fold !
Oh ! 'twould gladden thee my childie,
Knights so noble to behold !

“ Now, upon me gaze—my childie,
Kiss me—look with fearless eye,
For a knight, e'en such another,
Of the Holy Ghost am I ”

3.

Hushed without, the moon is hiding
Low behind the gloomy firs,
And the lamp within our chamber
With a dying flicker stirs.

But my little stars of azure
Shed around their lustrous rays,
And the crimson rose-bud blushes,
And the darling maiden says :

“ Little elfins and hobgoblins
Steal our bread and bacon’s store,
In the chest it lies at even,
In the morning—there no more.

“ And our cream the little elfins
Sip from off the milk with zest,
Coverless the platter leaving
And the cat laps up the rest.

“ And the cat, too, sure a witch is,
For when night and tempest lower,
Steals she to yon haunted mountain,
To the ancient, ruined tower.

“ There of old did stand a castle,
Where arms flashed mid revel high,
Glittering knights and dames and squires
Whirled in merry torch-dance by.

“ But accursed have folk and castle
By a wicked sorceress been,
And alone are ruins standing,
And the owls build nests therein.

“ Yet the aunt that 's dead would whisper,
That when once the chosen word,
Nightly at the chosen hour
At yon chosen spot is heard,

“ In a trice are changed the ruins
Back into a castle bright,
And in merry dance they mingle
Once again, squire, dame, and knight.

“ And whoso the word doth utter
Folk and castle shall possess,
Drums and trumpets sound in homage
To his youthful lordliness.”

Thus bloom tales of fairy legend
From the little mouth of rose,
And the while a star-like radiance
From her eyes of azure glows.

Round my hand her golden tresses
Twines the little maiden fast,
Calls by pretty names my fingers,
Laughs and kisses, hushed at last.

And all in the silent chamber
 Friendly glances at me throw ;
Cupboard, table, seem as had I
 Once beheld them long ago.

Ticks the clock demure and friendly,
 Scarce heard doth the zither seem
Of itself as if to tinkle,
 And I sit as in a dream.

Now is it the chosen hour,
 And the chosen spot as well ;
Yes—meseems as if there glided
 From my lips the chosen spell.

“ Seest thou, childie, how already
 Looms the midnight hour and quakes !
Roar the pines and torrent louder
 And the ancient mountain wakes.

“ Zither tones and songs of pigmies
 From the mountain chasm sound,
And forth as in spring run riot
 Blooms a flowery wood around.

“ Flowers, wanton magic flowers,
 Broad-leaved as in fairy land,
Fragrant, bright, and hotly eager,
 As by thrilling passion fanned.

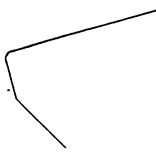
“ Wild as ruddy flames, the roses
Through the glowing bevy fling,
Lilies, like to shafts of crystal,
Upwards high as heaven spring.

“ And the stars, like suns in vastness,
With deep yearning gaze below :
In the giant-chaliced lilies
Streams their light in radiant flow.

“ But are we ourselves, sweet childie,
Altered even more than they ;
Silk and gold and gleam of torches
All around us sparkle gay.

“ Thou—a princess art transfigured,
And this hut 's a castle bright,
And rejoicing here and dancing
Are esquire and dame and knight.

“ And I, too,—yes, I henceforward
Thee, folk, castle, all possess,
Drums and trumpets sound in homage
To my youthful lordliness ! ”



II.


The shepherd boy—he is a monarch,
And the mossy hill his throne,
And the sun o'er head above him
Is his mighty golden crown.

At his feet the sheep are lying,
Red-crossed gentle courtiers they,
And the calves are cavaliers,
And they wander proudly gay.

And court-players are the kidlings,
And the birds and cattle stand
With their piping and their tinkling
For the royal household band.

And oh ! sweet the song and music !
And oh ! sweet the roaring sweeps
Of the waterfall and pine-trees,
And the monarch gently sleeps.

And meanwhile for him must govern
As a minister, his hound,
Whose impetuous loud baying
Doth re-echo all around.



Sleepily the youthful monarch
Lips : " How hard it is to reign,
Ah ! I would I were already
With my queen at home again !

" In my consort's arms reposing,
Soft my kingly head doth lie,
And within her eyes of beauty
Is my endless monarchy."

On the Brocken.

III.

In the East it gloweth brighter
By the sun's last glimmer kissed,
Far and wide the mountain summits
Ride through seas of cloudy mist.

Had I seven-leagued boots, O straightway
With the speed of wind I'd fly,
Over yonder mountain summits
To my darling's dwelling nigh.

Lightly would I where she slumbers
Ope the little curtained bed,
Lightly kiss her on her forehead,
Lightly her mouth's rubies red.

And more lightly would I whisper
Her small lily ear within,
"Dream that we still love each other
And have never parted been."

IV.

I am the Princess Ise,
In Ilsestein dwell I,
Come with me to my castle,
And blest the days shall fly.

I'll bathe thy temples gently
Where my clear waters shine,
And thou 'lt forget thy sorrows,
Thou woe-sick gallant mine !

And in my arms so snowy,
And on my breast of snow,
Lie dreaming joyous legends
Of ages long ago.

And I will kiss and caress thee
As I kissed and caressed
The gentle Kaiser Heinrich
Now gone unto his rest.

The dead are dead ; the living
In life alone have part ;
And I am fair and blooming,
And leaps my laughing heart.

Come down unto my castle,
My crystal castle fair,
Where dance the knights and maidens,
And joyous squires are there.

There silken trains are rustling,
And ring the spurs of steel,
There dwarfs sound drums and clarions,
And horns and viols peal.

My arms shall twine about thee
As they Kaiser Heinrich bound ;—
With closed ears I held him
When rang the trumpet's sound.

Die Nordsee.

1825-1826.



I.

Ye songs ! ye mine own dear songs
Up, up ! and arm yourselves !
Bid the clarions resound,
And lift me on the shield
This youthful maiden,
Who now o'er my whole heart
Holds empire as a Queen.

Hail to thee ! thou young Queen !

From the sun above
I snatch the streaming ruddy gold,
And weave of it a diadem
For thine all-hallowed head.

From the fluttering azure silk veil of Heaven,
Wherein the diamonds of night sparkle,
I sunder a precious fragment
And fold it as coronation-mantle
About thy royal shoulders.
I give thee a court household
Of prim-attired Sonnets,
Of haughty Terzines and courtly Stanzas;
As footman my wit shall serve thee,
As court-fool, my phantasy,
As herald, the laughing tears scutcheoned,
My humour shall serve thee.
But for myself, O Queen,
I lowly kneel before thee,
And in homage, on crimson velvet cushion,
 I present unto thee
 The morsel of sense
That out of pity hath still left me,
Thy predecessor in the realm.

II.

On the wan shore of ocean
I sat me troubled in thought and alone,
Deeper the sun had sunk and flung
Red-glowing shafts upon the water,
And the broad white waves,
Spurred by the tide,
Foamed and roared nearer and nearer—
A wondrous bluster, a whispering and whistling,
A laughing and murmuring, sighing and soughing,
And between, a cradle-song's mystic lullaby.
Methought that I listened to hygone sagas,
Olden beautiful legends
That of yore as a boy
I heard from the neighbours' children,
When we on summer's eve,
On the house-door's stone-steps
To the hushed tale all huddled close,
With little listening hearts
And all-enquiring eyes :
While the elder maidens,
Near flower-stands breathing fragrance,
Sat over against at the casement
With rosy faces,
Laughing, and lit by the moon.

III.

The ruddy glowing sun descends
Beneath the broad far-tremulous
Silver-gray sea world :
Visions of air, flushing with roseate breath,
Float in his wake : and opposite
From wan autumnal veils of cloud,
A sad and death-pale face,
 Breaks the moon without ;
And, following her, scintillant,
Nebulous, shimmer the stars.

Of yore in heaven glittered,
 In wedded union,
The goddess Luna and Sol the god,
And the stars all clustered round about them,
Their little innocent children.
But evil tongues whispered discord,
And they parted in anger,
The radiant pair sublime.

Now by day in lonely splendour
Stalks the sun-god yonder above,
 For his majesty
Besought and much extolled

Of proud and bliss-hardened mortals,
While in the night
O'er heaven wanders Luna,
The hapless mother,
With all her orphaned starry children ;
And she beams in silent melancholy,
And loving maidens and tender poets
Vow her their tears and song.

Gentle Luna, with womanly heart,
Loves she still ever her glorious spouse ;
At even, trembling and pale,
Glances she out from gossamer clouds,
And watches him vanishing sadly,
And fain would cry out in anguish "Come !
Come, thy children all yearn for thee."

But the imperious sun-god,
At the sight of his spouse deep flushes
In purple redoubled,
With wrath and grief,
And inexorably speeds he below
Into his wave-cold widowed bed.

Evil whispering tongues
Brought, in this wise, grief and perdition
E'en o'er the god-heads immortal,
And the hapless deities, yonder in heaven,

Wander in agony,
Hopeless, o'er ways never ending,
And die can they never
And carry with them
Their radiant anguish.

I, the man
Here below rooted, by death to be gladdened,
I sorrow no longer.

IV.

Starless and chill is the night,
The ocean foams ;
And over the sea, prostrate extended,
Lies the misshapen north wind,
And stealthy, with groaning, deep-stifled voice,
Like petulant grumbler to good humour won,
Mutters he low to the waves,
And many a mad tale recounts he,
Legends of ogres, breathing of slaughter,
Primeval sagas from Norway,
And between far-resounding laughs he and howls he
Mystic chants of the Edda,
And Runic legends,
Dark, defiant, of magical power,
Till the white sons of ocean
Leap up aloft, exulting,
Inebriate with frenzy.

Meanwhile on the level sea-shore,
On the wave-inundated sand,
Paces a stranger whose heart within him
Is wilder far than wind and billows.
Where'er he treads
Sparks fly forth and the shells grate crackling ;

And he wraps him close in his hoar-grey mantle,
And marches swift through the boisterous night,
Guided securely by the small taper
That luring and lovingly glimmers
From the lone fisherman's cottage.

Father and brother are far at sea,
And utterly alone rests yonder
In the cottage the fisherman's daughter,
The wondrous lovely fisherman's daughter,
At the hearth sits she,
And listens to the water-kettle's
Homely sound of sweetest augury,
And the crackling fagots throws on the fire,
And blows thereon,
Till the flickering ruddy light
Reflected streams with magic loveliness
On the blooming features,
On the soft snowy shoulder
Which, slipping, peeps rising
From out the rough grey smock,
And on the little vigilant hand
That her petticoat binds more firmly
Round the slender waist.

But swiftly the door springs open,
And the night's stranger enters within,
Calm in love his eye reposes

Upon the snowy, slender maiden
That tremblingly stands before him

Like to a startled lily ;
And to earth he tosses his mantle,
And laughs, and says :

See'st thou, my child, I keep my word,
And I come, and comes with me
The olden time, when the gods of heaven
Descended unto the daughters of men,
And the daughters of mortals wooing,

Did raise by them
A sceptre-bearing race of the monarchs
And heroes, marvels of earth.
Yet wonder, my child, no longer

At my divinity ;
And, I pray thee, make me some tea with rum,
For 'tis cold without,
And in such a night air
Freeze even we, we god-heads immortal ;
And lightly we catch the divinest of colds,
And with it a cough sempiternal.

V.

The shafts of sunlight played
Above the broad far-rolling sea ;
Far in the roadstead glittered the sail
Homeward to convey me destined ;
But the breezes propitious were failing,
And calmly I sat on the white sand-hills

On the lonely shore.

And I read the song of Odysseus,
The olden yet ever youthful song,
From whose sea-murmuring leaves
Rose gladsome before me
The breath of the god-heads,
And mens irradiate springtide,
And the beaming heaven of Hellas.

My generous heart faithfully followed
The son of Laertes in wandering and hardship,
Near to him clung, saddened in spirit,

By friendly hearths,

Where were queens spinning their purple,
And aided his wiles and happy escapes
From giants' caverns and naiads' embraces,
Followed him into Cimmerian night,

And in storm and shipwreck,
And suffered with him ineffable anguish

Sighing, I spake : " Dire Poseidon,
Thy wrath is terrible,
And my heart trembles
For my return."

Scarce the words had I uttered
Than the sea foamed,
And from the snowy waves arose
The sedgy-diademed head of the sea-god,
And, mocking, cried he :

" Little poet, fear thee not !
I will endanger not one whit
Thy poor barklet,
Nor make thee anxious for thy dear life
With over-hazardous rolling.
For thou, little poet, hast angered me never,
Thou never a single tower hast injured
Of Priam's consecrate fortress,
Never a single hair hast thou singed
Of the eye of my son Polyphemus,
And never hath thee with counsel preserved
The goddess of wisdom, Pallas Athene."

Thus outspake Poseidon,
And sank back again in the sea,

And o'er the rough seaman's jest
Loud laughed under the waters
Amphitrite, the blowzy fishwife,
And the witless daughters of Nereus.

VI.

Duskily rising, closed in the evening,
 Wilder tossed the flood,
And I sat on the shore and gazed upon
 The snowy dance of the waves,
And my bosom heaved like the sea,
And yearning, there seized me a deep home-longing
 Towards thee, thou dear image,
That everywhere hovers around me,
 And everywhere calls me,
 Everywhere ! everywhere !
In the sough of the wind, in the roar of the sea,
 And the sighing of my own heart.

With slender reed I traced on the sand,
 “ Agnes, I love thee ! ”
But angry waves flung themselves
 Over the sweet avowal
 And blotted it out.

Fragile reed ! vanishing sand !
Dissolving waves ! I trust ye no more.
The heavens grow darker, my heart throbs fiercer,
And, with mighty hand, from Norway's forests
 I uproot the loftiest pine
 And plunge it within

The glowing abyss of Etna, and with the same
Fire-immersed Titanic pen
I write upon the dark curtain of heaven,
“ Agnes ! I love thee ! ”

Every night gloweth thereafter,
High above, the flame-writ eternal,
And all earth's generations succeeding
Read, exulting, the heavenly letters,
“ Agnes ! I love thee.”

VII.

The sea hath its pearls,
The stars gem the skies,
But homed in my heart
Love radiant lies.

Sea and sky boundless roll,
But my heart vaster far,
With its love brighter gleams
Than the pearl or the star.

To this great heart of mine,
Little maiden come nigh,
For all melting with love
Are my heart, sea, and sky.

* * *

On the azure vault of heaven,
Where the lovely stars are twinkling,
Fain would I my lips be pressing,
Pressing wild and weep impassioned.

Yonder stars above, the eyes are
Of my darling, many twinkling
Shimmer they and greet me kindly
From the azure vault of heaven.

Towards the azure vault of heaven,
Towards the eyes of the beloved one,
Do I raise my arms devoutly,
And I supplicate with weeping :

Kindly beaming eyes, grace-beacons !
O'er my soul, oh ! shed your blessing,
Let me die and win possession
Of ye and your boundless heaven !

* * * *

From the eyes of heaven yonder,
Tremulous sparks of gold are falling
Through the night, and swells my spirit
Wider yet with love and wider.

O ye eyes of heaven yonder !
Weep yourselves upon my spirit,
That with radiant starry tears
May my soul be overflowing.

* * * *

Cradled by the ocean billows
And by dreamy meditations,
Lie I tranquil in my cabin,
Nestled in my cot nook-hidden.

Through the open port behold I
The far-distant stars refulgent,
The belovéd eyes bewitching
Of my sweet and much belovéd one.

The belovéd eyes bewitching
Keep their guardian watch above me,
And they glimmer and they twinkle
From the azure vault of heaven.

Towards the azure vault of heaven
Do I gaze long happy hours,
Till a veil-like cloud of silver
Shrouds the eyes belovéd from me.

* * * *

Against the ship's planked side,
Where lies my dreaming head,
Are bursting the billows, the raging billows ;
They ripple and murmur
All soft in my ear :
"Deluded mortal !

Thine arm is short, and the heavens are wide,
And the stars above are firmly riveted
With golden nails,—
Fruitless yearning, sighs unavailing,
'Twere better for thee didst thou slumber."

* * * *

I dreamed a vision of a spacious heath
Far overspread with pure unruffled snow,
And 'neath the spotless snow I buried lay,
And slept the cold and lonely sleep of death.

But yonder gazed from out the sombre heaven
Below upon my grave the starry eyes,
The dear eyes ! and aye they gazed triumphant,
Serenely bright and yet with love o'erflowing.

VIII.

The storm is raging
And lashes the billows,
And the billows, chafing with fury and rearing,
Tower on high, and quiver with life
The snowy mountains of waters,
And the barklet ascends them
With toilsome eagerness,
And headlong swift falls below
In the gloomy, wide-yawning gulf of waters !

O sea !
Mother of beauty, of the Foam-risen,
Love's mother's mother ! have pity on me !
Already flutters, scenting the dead,
The snow-white ghostly sea-mew,
And whets its beak on the mast-head,
And for the heart doth greedily crave
That rings with thy daughter's renown,
And which the sly urchin, thy grandchild,
Hath chosen as toy.

In vain my prayers and tears !
My cries are lost in the raging storm,
In the tocsin of the wind ;

It roars and pipes and blusters and howls
Like a madhouse of sounds !
Between them fall on my ears
Enchanting harp-tones,
Strains of wild longing,
Soul-dissolving and soul-subduing,
And well the voice I recall.

Afar on Scotland's rock-bound coast,
Where the gray fortress beetles
Over the breaking sea,
Yonder at the high-domed casement
A fair wan woman stands,
Of softest loveliness and marble pale ;
And the harp she touches and sings,
Her tresses lifted by the winnowing wind
That bears her saddened song
Over the wide tempestuous sea.

IX.

Still is ocean ! Its resplendence
Flings the sun upon the waters,
And amid the surging jewels
Furrows green the ship is cleaving.

By the steersman lies the boatswain
Stretched at length and lightly snoring.
By the mast, the sails repairing,
Sitting is the tarry ship-boy.

'Neath the grime his cheek that covers
Glow's a ruddiness, and sadly
Quivers the broad mouth, and pensive
The large lustrous eyes are gazing.

For the captain stands before him,
Raves and swears and rates him: "Scoundrel,
Scoundrel ! so thou hast a herring
From the barrel stolen from me !"

Still is ocean ! From the billows
Peers a wary fishlet upwards,
In the sun his head while warming
Merrily his tail he plashes.

But the sea-mew from the breezes
Shoots upon the fish below her,
And the sudden spoil her beak in
Soars she up into the azure.

X.

As I reclined by the ship's side,
And gazed with dream-musing eyes
Below in the mirror-clear waters,
And gazed deeper and deeper
 Into the depths of the ocean,—
At first like vaporous haze,
Then by degrees in colours more vivid,
Domes of churches and towers appeared,
And last, a whole city, clear as the sun,
Of mediæval time, in the lowlands,
 And thronged with men,
Solemn figures in sable mantles,
With snowy frills and chains of honour,
And lengthy swords and long-drawn faces,
Stalked the teeming market-place o'er
To the lofty stair-flighted hall,
Where marble forms of the Cæsars
Kept stern watch with sceptre and sword.
Not afar, by long rows of houses
With mirror-lustrous casements,
And the lindens clipped pyramidal,
Wander maidens in rustling silk,

Graceful forms, the blooming faces
With sable wimples modestly circled,
Whence out-streams their golden hair.
Gay gallants in Spanish garb,
Stately, pass by saluting.

Venerable dames
In brown outlandish dress,
With hymn-book and rosary in hand,
Hasten with tripping steps
To the mighty minster,
Sped by the chiming of bells
And the organ's loud peal.

O'erwhelmed me at the distant sound
Mysterious horror !
Yearning unending, sadness profound
Stole o'er my heart,
My but newly-healed heart.
Meseemed as though its every wound,
Kissed open by beloved lips,
Began to bleed again—
Warm ruddy drops,
That long and lingering fell
Upon an ancient house below
In the deep ocean city,
Upon an ancient high-gabled house
That sadly untenanted stands,

Save that at the low casement
 A maiden sits,
Her head pillowed on her arm,
Like some poor child forgotten—
And I know thee, thou poor forgotten child!

Thus deep, and ocean deep,
Hid'st thou thyself from me
With childish caprice,
And couldst no more ascend.
And strange didst dwell amidst strange people
 Centuries long,
The while that I with sorrowful soul
Through the whole earth sought thee,
And ever did seek thee,
 Thou ever-belovéd,
 Thou lost for long,
 Thou found at last.
I have found thee, and see again
 Thy winsome face,
The arch and faithful eyes,
 The darling smile;
And never again will I quit thee more,
And I hasten beneath unto thee,
And with out-stretched arms
I fling myself down on thy heart.

But in the nick of time
The captain caught at my foot,
From the ship's side drew me,
And cried, angrily laughing,
"Why, Doctor! are you mad?"

XI.

Rest thee in thy depths of ocean,
Delirious dream,
That of yore so many a night
With hollow delight my heart hath wrung,
And now, an ocean spectre,
Doth threaten me even in light of day—
Rest thou for ever there below,
And I will fling down unto thee
All my sins and my sorrows,
And the cap and bells of folly
That long about my head hath tinkled,
And the cold glistening serpent-skin,
Dissimulation,
That round my soul so long hath twined
The sickly soul,
The God-disowning, angel denying,
Unhappy soul—
Heigho ! heigho ! Now comes the wind !
Up with the sails ! They flap and swell !
Over the silent, perilous plain,
The vessel speeds,
And the freed soul is exulting.

XII.

High in the heavens stood the sun,
 Begirt by fleecy clouds ;
 The sea was calm,
And pensive lay I by the ship's stern,
Dreamily pensive,—and half in waking,
Half in slumber, saw I Christ,
The Saviour of the world.
In long-flowing snowy robe
Moved He in giant vastness
 Over land and sea ;
His head towered in the heavens,
His hands He stretched in blessing
 Over land and sea ;
And for a heart in his bosom
 Bore he the sun,
The ruddy flaming sun :
And the ruddy flaming sun-heart
Poured its gracious beams
And its sweet and love-blesséd light,
 Radiant and glowing,
 Over land and sea.

The chiming bells were solemnly drawing,
Hither and thither, drawing like swans,
By bands of roses, the gliding ship,

And drew it in frolic to the green shore,
Where men were dwelling in the high-towered
Beetling city.

Marvel of peace ! How calm the city !
Stilled was the sullen murmur
Of babbling feverish industry,
And through the unsoiled echoing streets
Men did move in raiment white,
 With branches of palm,
And wheresoe'er two did meet
They glanced with intelligence each on the other,
And trembling in love, and sweet resignation,
Kissed each the other's forehead,
 And gazed above
Upon the sun-heart of the Saviour,
Which in glad atonement its ruddy blood
 Rayed forth below,
And thrice blessed, exclaimed they :
" Praised be Jesus Christ ! "

Zweiter Enclus.

I.

Thalatta ! Thalatta !

Hail unto thee, thou ocean eternal !

Hail unto thee ten thousand times

From jubilant hearts,

As once did hail thee

Ten thousand Grecian hearts,

Hardship-encountering, ever home-yearning,

World-renowned Grecian hearts.

The billows were heaving,

They heaved and they blustered,

The sun poured showering down

His frolicking rosy splendours,

The startled flight of sea-mews

Flitted across loud-screaming,

The chargers were pawing, the bucklers were ringing,

And afar echoed, like victory's shout,

Thalatta ! Thalatta !

Hail unto thee, thou ocean eternal !
With voices of home thy waters are **plashing**,
Like visions of childhood I see a **resplendence**
Upon thy moving kingdom of waters,
And olden memories newly are telling
Of all the dear beautiful playthings,
Of all the glittering Christmas gifts,
Of all the ruddy coral branches,
Goldfish, pearls, and many-hued shells
That thou mysteriously dost treasure
In yon clear hall of crystal below.

O ! how have I languished in lonely exile !
Like to a faded flower
In the botanist's leaden casket,
My heart lay in my bosom.
Meseems as had I through long winter lain
A sufferer in a dark sick chamber,
And now as suddenly quit it,
And dazzling streams down upon me
The emerald spring, the sunlight awakened,
And the snowy blossoming trees are rustling,
And the young flowers are gazing upon me
With bright odoriferous eyes,
All is fragrance, and humming and breathing and smiling,
And in the blue heavens are singing the birds,
Thalatta, Thalatta !

Thou hectoring, yielding heart !
How oft, bitterly oft,
Have pressed me sore the North's barbarian women !
With full, all-conquering eyes
Sped they their burning shafts ;
With crafty, smooth-polished words
Did they threaten to cleave my heart ;
With arrow-cyphered bullets smote they deep
My poor distracted brain ;
In vain I brandished a covering shield,
The arrows whistled, the blows did crash,
And by the North's barbarian women
Was I hurled back to the ocean—
And freely breathing, I greeted the ocean,
The dear delivering ocean,
Thalatta, Thalatta !

II.

Heavily lay the tempest on ocean,
And through the sable wall of cloud
Darted the forkéd lightning flash,
Swiftly up-gleaming, vanishing swiftly,
Like sense from the head of Kronion.
 Over the wide tumultuous waters,
 Afar the thunders are rolling,
And leap the snow-white steeds of the waters,
 Bred by Boreas' self
From the beautiful mares of Ericthon,
And uneasily flit by the sea-fowl
Like shadowy corpses on Styx,
Which Charon repels from his midnight' bark.

 Hapless, blithe little bark,
Dancing yonder the sorriest dance !
Æolus sends it the nimblest companions,
Who madly strike up for the frolicsome dance ;
One doth pipe, another doth blow,
A third scrapes the dull double bass,
And the reeling sailor stands at the helm,
And gazes steadily upon the compass,

The vibrating soul of the ship,
And raises his hands beseechingly to heaven,
" Oh, save me, Castor, horseman heroic,
And thou knight of the fist, Polydeuces !

III.

Hope and love ! Shattered together !

And I myself, like to a corpse
Which the sea hath angrily upcast,
I lie on the shore,

On the lone desert shore.

Before me heaves the waste of waters,
Behind me lies desolation and sorrow,
And over me flit past the clouds,
The shapeless sombre daughters of air,
Who from the sea, in pails of cloud,

Draw up the waters,

Drawing and drawing them wearily ever,

And pouring them into the ocean again,

A mournful, wearisome task,

And fruitless as this life of mine.

The billows murmur, the sea-mews scream,

Olden memories towards me are wafted,

Dreams long-forgotten, visions gone by,

Sweet in their anguish burst on my sight.

A lady dwells in the Northland,

A beauteous lady queenly fair.

The slender cypress form

A radiant robe of white encircles ;

The sable wreath of tresses,

Like a happy night,

Streaming adown from the braid-crowned head
Circles dreamily sweet
Around the sweet pale face,
And from out the sweet pale face
Full and resistless streams an eye
Like a sable sun.

O, thou sable sun, how oft,
Bewitching oft, drank I from thee
The maddening flames of rapture,
And stood and reeled, fire-frenzied,—
Then would hover a dove-soft smile
Around the disdainful haughty lips ;
And the disdainful haughty lips
Breathed words soft as moonlight
And sweet as the scent of the rose,—
And my spirit ascended
And soared like an eagle aloft in the heavens !

Peace, ye billows and sea-mews !
Vanished is all. Hope and happiness,
Hope and love ! I lie on the earth,
A desolate, shipwrecked man,
And press my burning face
On the humid sand.

IV.

The glorious sun
Hath calmly sunk below in the sea ;
The heaving waters already are tinted
 By the gloomy night,
Save that eve's crimson flush
Over it sheds its golden splendours ;
 And the roaring might of the flood
Rolls to the shore the snowy waves
 That eager and frolicking skip
 Like flocks of fleecy lambs,
Which at even the carolling shepherd-boy,
 Homeward doth drive.

 " How fair is the sun."
So spake, after long silence, the friend
 Who with me on the shore wandered,
And jesting half, and half in sadness,
 Insisting, affirmed that was the sun
A lovely woman* whom had the old sea-god
 From expediency wedded.

By day above she wanders happy
Through the high heavens, decked in purple,
And blazing in diamonds,

* The sun is feminine in German.

And all beloved and all admired
Of all the creatures of earth,
And all the creatures of earth delighting
With her glance's lustre and warmth :
But at even, disconsolate driven
Back she turns her again
To her humid home, to the dreary arms
Of her hoary spouse.

" Believe me," added thereto my friend,
And laughed and sighed and laughed again,
" They dwell down yonder in tenderest wedlock !
Either they sleep or rail at each other,
Till high here above the ocean is foaming,
And the mariner hears midst the roar of the waves
How the Ancient his wife upbraids :
' Thou round jade of the universe !
Lustre-coquetting !
The live-long day thou glowest for others,
And nightly for me art thou frosty and wearied ! '
After such curtain-lecture,
Unfailingly bursteth out in tears
The haughty sun, and moans her misery,
And moans so piteously that the sea-god
Sudden despairingly springs out of bed, .
And swift to the sea's surface upward swims
To recover his breath and his senses.

Even thus I beheld him on yesternight
Rising from ocean as high as his breast,
He carried a jacket of yellow flannel,
 And a night-cap lily-white,
 And a crestfallen visage.”

V.

The grayness of even o'er ocean is stealing,
And lonely, with none but his lonely soul,
Sits there a man on the barren strand,
And gazes with death-cold glance above
Towards the out-spread death-cold vault of heaven,
And looks on the wide tumultuous sea—
And over the wide tumultuous sea
Like airy ships his sighs are sailing,
And turn back again, grief-smitten,
And discover his heart close barred,
Wherein they fain would anchor;
And he groans so loud that the snowy sea-mews,
Startled from out their sandy nests,
Flutter around him in flocks;
And to them he addresses these laughing words:

“Sable-legged birds,
With snowy pinions the sea o'erfitting,
With curv'd bills sea-water up-sucking,
And train-oily seal's flesh devouring,
Your life is bitter e'en as your sustenance!
But I, the happy one, taste naught but sweetness!
I taste the sweet fragrance of the rose,
The moonlight-nourished bride of the nightingale,
I taste yet sweeter luscious confections

Filled with whipped cream to o'erflowing,
And the sweetest of all do I taste,
Sweet love, and the bliss of being loved.

“ She loves me, she loves me ! the gentle maiden !
Now stands she at home in her cottage balcony,
And peers in the gloaming without, on the highway,
And listens, after me pining—yea, verily !
In vain she gazes around and is sighing,
And sighing trips she below to the garden,
And wanders mid perfume and moonlight,
And talks to the flowers, recounting to them
How I, her belovéd, so loveable am,
And so worthy of love—yea verily !
At night on her couch, in slumber, in dreams,
Around her flits happily my dear image ;
In the morning, too, at her breakfast,
On the glistening bread and butter
She sees my countenance smiling,
And she eats it all up for love—yea verily ! ”

Thus he vaunts and he vaunts,
And, between, the sea-mews are screaming
With cold ironical titter.
The hazy mists are upwards ascending ;
Forth from the violet clouds all weirdly,
Peeps without the grass-yellow moon,

Roaring loud are the ocean billows,
And from the depths of the sounding sea,
 Sadly as whispering breezes,
 Floats the song of the Oceanides,
The lovely, compassionate water-naiads ;
Over all ringing the love-breathing music
Of the silver-footed bride-goddess of Peleus,
 And they sigh and they sing :

“O fool, thou fool, thou blustering fool !
 Thou grief-tormented !
All thy hopes are ruthlessly slaughtered,
 The heart's rejoicing children.
And ah ! thy heart, like unto Niobe,
 Grief-turned to stone !
Within thy heart is the gloom of night,
And through it there flashes the lightning of frenzy,
 And of woe thou boastest !
O fool, thou fool, thou blustering fool !
Headstrong as thine ancestor art thou,
The lofty Titan, who heavenly fire
Stole from the gods and gave unto men,
And vulture-tormented, rock-enchained,
Defied Olympus, defied it and groaned
Till we could hear it in deepest Ocean,
And to him hied with compassionate song
O fool, thou fool, thou blustering fool !

Thou art even more impotent still ;
And it were wiser thou honour'dst the gods
And borest with patience the load of sorrow,
And borest unamurmuring longer and longer,
Till Atlas' self his patience loses,
And the weighty world from his shoulders flings
In eternal night."

So rang the song of the Oceanides,
The lovely, compassionate water-naiads,
Till the louder waves did overpower it ;
Behind the clouds withdrew the moon,
The night deepened,
And long I sat in the gloaming, weeping.

VI.

Full beaming moon ! Beneath thy light
Like liquid gold doth gleam the sea ;
As daylight's splendour witch'd into twilight,
It lies on the broad expanse of shore ;
And in the clear blue starless heaven
 Hover the snowy clouds,
Like to colossal imaged god-heads,
 Of glistening marble.

No, never more ! these are no clouds !
 They are themselves the gods of old Hellas,
Who once so gladly the world did rule,
 But now supplanted and lifeless,
Like portentous spectres are driving
 Over the midnight heaven.
Wondering and strangely dazzled behold I
 The gladsome Pantheon,
The solemnly silent, fearfully moving
 Figures Titanic.
He, yon, is Kronion the monarch of heaven ;
 Snow-white are the locks on his brow,
The locks renownéd, Olympus convulsing ;
 He holds in his hands the quenched lightnings,
 Upon his face lies dejection and grief,
And yet still ever the olden pride.
 Those were happier times, O Zeus,

When thou wert celestially joying
Over youths and nymphs and over hecatombs !
Yet even deities reign not for ever,

 The younger displace the elder.
As thou once thyself thy hoary sire,
And thy Titanic uncle supplanted,

 Jupiter Parricida !

Thee know I also, haughty Juno !
Despite thy ever-jealous disquiet,
Another now the sceptre hath taken,
And thou art no more the queen of heaven,
And thy full-beaming eye is glazed,
And are thy lily arms all powerless,
And never more shall thy vengeance touch

 The god-espoused virgin,
And the wonder-working son of the deity.
Thee know I also, Pallas Athene !
With shield and wisdom wert thou unable
 To avert the deities' ruin.

Thee know I also—thee, too, Aphrodite !
 Once the golden, now the silvern !
Though grace thee ever thy zone's love-witchery,

 I secretly shudder before thy beauty ;
And though rejoiced me thy beautiful form,
Like other heroes, of dread should I die.
A goddess of corpses thou art to me,

 Venus Libitina !

No more with love doth glance towards thee,
Yonder the terrible Ares.
Sadly appeareth Phœbus Apollo,
The stripling. His lyre is silent,
Which so joyously rang at the feast of the Gods.
Sadder still looks Hephæstus,
And truly the limper never again
Fills he the office of Hebe,
Nor pours busily in the assembly
The exquisite nectar. And long is extinguished
The inextinguishable laughter of gods.

I have loved thee never, ye deities !
For the Greeks to me are repugnant,
And the Romans to me are as hateful ;
Yet holy pity and trembling compassion
Streams through my heart
When I behold you there above,
Forsaken deities,
Dead night-wandering shadows,
Filmy cloud-drift that the wind doth scare,—
And when I bethink me how tame and airy
The deities are victorious over you,
The modern, reigning, sorry deities,
The plotters of mischief in sheepskins of meekness,
O I am seized with a gloomy resentment,
And I would destroy the modern temples

And fight for you, ye olden deities,
For you and your good ambrosial right ;
 And before your towering altars,
Restored once again and smoking with victims,
 I would myself fain kneel and pray,
And raise my arms supplicating.—

For evermore, ye ancient deities,
Have ye of yore in combats of mortals
Taken ever the part of the victors,
More magnanimous man is than you,
And in the strife of the gods do I hold ever
Firm to the side of the deities vanquished.

Thus I spake, and visibly reddened
Above, the pallid cloud-woven figures,
And gazed on me as the dying,
Transfigured by sorrow, and suddenly vanished.
 The moon withdrew herself
Veiled behind clouds that darkly sped onward ;
 Loud the ocean roared,
And out on the heavens victorious marched
 The eternal stars.

VII.

By the sea, the dreary night-shadowed sea,
Stands a manly youth ;
His breast full of sadness, his heart full of doubtings,
And with sullen lips he asks of the waves :

“ O solve me the riddle of life,
The woeful, primeval riddle,
O'er which many heads already have pondered,
Heads in heiroglyphical bonnets,
Heads in turbans and black baretas,
Heads in perukes and thousand other
Hapless, labouring heads of men.
Tell me what is it that man doth mean ?
Whence doth he come ? Whither doth go ?
Who dwells there above with the golden stars ? ”

The billows but murmur their murmur eternal,
The wind but bloweth, the clouds drive onward,
The stars ever twinkle, heedless and cold,
And a fool awaiteth the answer.

VIII.

A bird comes from the westward flying,
It flies towards the east ;
Towards the garden home in the East,
Where the spices are breathing and budding,
And rustle the palms, and cool are the fountains,
And flying, thus sings the wondrous bird :

“ She loves him ! She loves him !
His image she bears in her little heart,
And bears it sweetly, secretly hidden,
Nor knows it herself !
But in her dreaming stands he before her,
She prays and she weeps and kisses his hand,
And calls on his name,
And calling she wakes and lies all startled,
And wondering presses her beautiful eyes—
She loves him, she loves him ! ”

Against the mast leaning, upon the high deck
I stood and heard the song of the bird.
Like dark green coursers with manes of silver
Leaped up the snow-white curling waves :
Like flocks of swans were gliding onward
With glittering sails the men of Heligoland,
The nomads bold of the North Sea.

Over me in eternal blue
 Were hovering snowy clouds,
And sparkled the sun everlasting,
The rose of the heavens, glowing with fire,
 In the sea joyously mirrored ;—
And ocean and sky and my own heart
 Resounded in echo :
“ She loves him ! She loves him ! ”

Epilogue.

As in the fields the blades of wheat,
So shoot up and wave in the spirit of man
 His thoughts ;
But the tender thoughts of love
Are between them the gay-coloured blossoming
 Scarlet and blue flowers.

 Scarlet and blue flowers !
The early reaper rejects you as useless,
Wooden flails thresh you out scornfully ;
 Even the needy wayfarer,
Whom your sight delights and refreshes,
 Shakes his head
And calls you beautiful weeds.

 But the country maiden,
The wreather of garlands,
Honours and plucks you,
And decks with you her beautiful tresses,
And thus adorned hies to the green,
Where pipes and fiddles sweetly are sounding,
 Or to the silent beech,
Where the voice of the loved one lovelier sounds
 Than pipes or fiddles.

Letzte Gedichte und Gedanken.

I.

I thought of her the live-long day,
And thought of her through half the night,
And as I deep in slumber lay,
A dream conveyed me to her light.

All blushing like a budding rose,
She sitteth still in blissful calm,
A frame doth on her lap repose,
In which she works a snow-white lamb.

She glanceth softly, nor doth know
Why thus I stand so sad to see :
“ Why doth thy face such pallor show ?
Say, Heinrich, who is grieving thee ? ”

She glanceth soft in wonder why
 Into her eyes I weeping see :
 “ Why weepest thou so bitterly ?
 Say, Heinrich, who is grieving thee ? ”

She gazes gently on me now,
 While I scarce bear my agony :
 “ Who grieveth me, sweet love ? ’tis thou !
 And ’tis my heart that aches in me.”

Then up she rose, her hand she laid
 Demurely on my bosom—when
 At once my anguish all was stayed,
 And joyous I awoke again.



II.

In peace let us unite us
Ye little flowerets sweet,
With laugh and chat delight us,
And blithe and joyous meet.

Thou maybell with thy whiteness,
Thou rose of blushing hue,
Thou pink flecked o'er with brightness,
Forget-me-not of blue !

Come flowerets gay or lonely,
Ye all shall welcome be ;
The mignonette shall only
Be friendly ne'er with me.

III.

What wilt thou, sad sweet vision of my dreaming?
I see thee and do feel thy breath's warm glow!
Thou gazest on me with a desolate seeming;
Thee know I, and, alas! thou me dost know.

A stricken man am I, my limbs now languish
Lifeless, and my heart's fire flickers low,
Enwrapped in gloom and bowed by cruel anguish;
Far other when I met thee long ago.

In pride of strength and from my home far straying,
I chased a long-dreamed wild ideal there;
I sought the earth to crush in powder braying,
And from the skies the very stars to tear.

Frankfort, that fosterest fools and knaves scarce wiser,
I love thee; Germany is in thy debt
For the best poet and many a right good Kaiser,
And art the town where I the charmer met.

I strolled along the booths their fair fronts raising,
'Twas market-time and folks all chaffering were,
Bright was the swarming throng as I was gazing
Dreamily on the crowd's busy stir.

There saw I *her*, and with a strange sweet wonder,
I watched the lissom-gliding form and light,
The heavenly eyes that beamed their soft brows under,
How they did thrill me with a wondrous might !

And on through streets and market tripped she lightly,
Unto a little lane's sequestered nook,
There turned her the sweet child, and, smiling brightly,
Vanished i' the house—and I her steps o'ertook.

By heaven ! in other maids as well as muses
Am I well-versed, me no smooth face can snare ;
Like hers, I trow, ne'er beat a heart's feigned ruses,
And falsehood never can such glances wear.

And lovely ! lovelier ne'er did the unreal
Goddess rising from the sea-foam seem ;
Perchance was *she* the beautiful ideal
That I had pictured in my boyish dream.

I knew it not, my senses undiscerning,
For woven round me was a strange spell wrought,
Perchance the bliss which I had long sought yearning
My arm encircled—yet I knew it not.

But lovelier was she in her desolate sorrow
When, after the third day that I had lain
Dreamily lulled on her sweet breast, the morrow
Impelled me on the olden chase again,

She with despairing gestures wilder growing,
With hair dishevelled, her clasped hands did wring,
And then upon the earth herself down throwing,
And sobbing loudly, to my knees did cling.

Great heaven! About my very spurs entwining
Her tresses caught—I saw the blood stream o'er—
Yet tore myself away, for e'er resigning
My poor child, and never saw her more.

Passed is the olden frenzy, yet, pursuing,
The child's sad image haunts me where I go.
Where strayest thou, in what cold desert rueing?
To misery I gave thee, and to woe.

IV.

The ocean waves gleam brightly
Where the moon's rays are strewn,
In a bark that dances lightly
Two lovers sail alone.

"Thou art pale and paler growing,
Thou heart's beloved of me."
"Hark, sweet, to the plash of rowing,
My father comes—'tis he!"

"Then must we swim, I fear me,
Thou heart's beloved of me."
"I hear him, love, rowing near me;
I hear him raging at thee."

"Then bear thy head up higher,
Thou heart's beloved of me."

"O woe, love, the waters nigher
In my ears come piercingly."

"Benumbed are now my feet, love,
Thou heart's beloved of me."

"Ah! death for ever sweet, love,
Within thy arms must be."

V.

Eyes that I have long forgotten,
Many a shaft their beam now lances,
And again the spells bewitch me
From the maiden's tender glances.

And her lips again recall me
Bygone hours with their kisses,
When all day I swam in folly,
And all night dream-lulled in blisses.

VI.

My pride doth prompt me that thou art
Thy love for me concealing ;
But whispers sager thought, 'tis all
Thy nobleness of feeling.

That thou dost him to honour strive
Whom all are lightly naming,
That thou to me art doubly kind
Whom others wrong, defaming.

Thou art so sweet, thou art so fair,
Thy accents so do calm me,
The words like liquid music breathe,
And like the roses balmy.

Thou seemest like a lofty star,
From heaven a welcome sending,
Thou dost my night on earth illume,
My woes a sweetness lending.

VII.

Where doth fate the pilgrim straying
 His last resting-place assign?
 'Neath the southern palm-trees swaying?
 'Neath the lindens by the Rhine?

Shall I in some waste sink dying,
 Buried by a stranger's hand?
 Or sleep on a far shore lying
 Of some lone sea, in the sand?

Little reck I? Still before me,
 There as here, shall spread the skies,
 And like funeral torches o'er me
 Shall the stars at night arise.

Anhang älterer Gedichte.

1816-1824.

I.

Son of folly ! dream as ever
 When to thrill thy heart doth seem ;
Yet in life, ah ! seek thou never,
 The ideal of thy dream.

Once when happier days were o'er me,
 On Rhine's loftiest peak I stood,
Germany's fair land before me
 Lay by the bright sunlight wooed.

'Neath me were the waters weaving
 Melodies of softest spell,
And sweet thoughts a rapture leaving
 In my heart caressing fell.

List I now to waters singing,
 But they weave another strain ;
 Long the sweet dream hath fled winging,
 The sweet spell long burst in twain.

Gazing from my lofty station
 On the lands that 'neath me sweep,
 See I but a pigmy nation
 O'er the graves of giants creep.

Idlers silken raiment wearing
 Call themselves the nation's vaunt,
 Knaves are stars of honour wearing,
 Hirelings as nobles flaunt.

Now the German garb doth find us
 Aping but our father's ways,
 'Tis the faded coats remind us
 Sadly of the olden days :

When good manners, pious reverence,
 Went all simply hand in hand ;
 When youth with a modest deference,
 Bashful before age would stand ;

When no youth a maiden courted
 With the gallantries in mode ;
 When no despots' wit imported
 Perjury reduced to code ;

When a hand-shake more than swearing,
Or a law-deed, could assure ;
When each man was armour wearing
And a heart within him bore.

In our gardens still are gleaming
Thousand flowers rare and bright,
Sprung from soil with blessings teeming,
Bathing in the soft sun-light.

But of all, the flower delighting,
In our gardens ne'er doth blow,
Which in olden time, inviting,
On the very rocks did grow ;

Which on each cold craggy tower,
By the mailed hands of men,
Cherished was as fairest flower,
Hospitality called then.

Wend thy steps, ah ! pilgrim weary,
To yon lofty castle ne'er,
For no warm bright room, but dreary
Cold walls shall receive thee there.

From his tower no warder shrilly
Blows, no drawbridge falls below.
Lord and warder slumber stilly
In the cold grave long ago.

In their gloomy coffins sleeping
 Lie, too, beauteous dames of old,
 For such shrines are treasures keeping
 Richer far than pearls and gold.

There the breeze's tremulous wreathing,
 As with minstrel music blows,
 For love in pure accents breathing
 From those holy ruins rose.

Our dames esteem I truly,
 Who are blooming as the May;
 They, too, love and practise duly
 Painting, dance, embroidery.

Sweetest strains they carol weaving,
 Of the lore and truth of yore,
 But in secret scarce believing
 In the truth those legends bore.

Knew our mothers once, as knoweth
 But a simple faith like theirs,
 That the fairest gem that gloweth
 Man within his bosom wears.

In the fashion keeping nearly
 Their wise daughters follow them,
 For in our days women dearly
 Love they, too, the glittering gem.

Superstition fraud and lying
 Govern. Life no charms doth home ;
Jordan's matchless pearls belying
 The imperial pride of Rome.

Dreams of happier hours ! breaking,
 Haste back in your gloom to fly,
Vain laments no more awaking
 Of the days that us deny.

II.

Thou who art so pure, so fair,
Love-sweet maid beyond compare,
In thy service might I dare
A life devote, how sweet it were!

Glance thy lovely eyes whene'er
'Tis as moonlight in the air;
And their rosy lights declare
Two soft cheeks, a blushing pair.

And thy little mouth doth bear
What do seem strung pearls and rare,
But a fairer jewel ne'er
Than thy heart doth bosom wear.

Love which but the pure may share
Did within my heart repair,
As on thine first gazed I there,
Love-sweet maid beyond compare.

III.

Lone, must I, my sorrows waking,
In the lap of night complain ;
Merry comrades all forsaking,
Timorous flee, where joy doth reign.

Silent are my tears flowing,
Streaming ever, streaming still,
But my heart's sighs fiercely glowing,
Quench them, aye, no tears will.

Once a merry boy and laughing,
Played I many a sportive game,
Life's gift with each breath inquaffing,
And knew naught of sorrow's name.

Seemed the world a garden blending
Hues of every flower that blows,
And my day-work flowers tending,
Jessamine, violet, and rose.

In green meads when pensive dreaming
Saw I flowing streamlets clear ;
Now I gaze—their waters gleaming,
Mirror a wan image here.

Gloom is on my spirit weighing
Since on *her* my eyes first fell,
Secret pangs are on me preying,
Wrought o'er me a wondrous spell.

In my heart long held I clinging,
Angels of calm peace and love,
These have trembling soared up-winging
To their starry home above.

Shades of night mine eyes are veiling,
Angry shapes rise boding ill ;
And within my heart low wailing,
Murmurs a strange voice and still.

Anguish strange and a strange yearning
Rise in me with fiercest throes,
And within my bosom burning
A strange wasting fire glows.

But that in my heart untiring
Ceaseless flames devour me now,
That I sink from love expiring—
Love, behold ! this doest thou.

IV.

Each lad with his arm in his lass's entwined,
Strolls 'neath the lindens by ;
While, lack-a-day ! with fortune unkind,
All lonely ramble I.

My heart is straitened, mine eye is sad
When two happy lovers I see ;
For a sweet love I, too, once had,
But she dwells afar from me.

This many a year ne'er a murmur I make,
But can bear no more the pain,
And my knapsack will tie and my staff will take,
And roam through the world again.

And will ramble on through the circling hours
Till I come to the mighty town
Which gleams with its three stately towers
By a river's mouth adown.

There soon will vanish all love's care,
There joys my coming greet ;
Love's arm in mine, I'll wander where
O'er-shade the lindens sweet.

V.

When I anear my true love be,
 Then leaps my heart with pride ;
 Then rich in soul, I 'd barter free
 The world and all beside.

But when doth come the parting day,
 From her fair arms to speed,
 My wealth all vanishes away
 And I am poor indeed.

VI.

In my father's garden hidden grows
A floweret drooping and wan;
When the winter passed and the spring arose,
The pale flower still drooped on.
The floweret pale doth show
Like a sad bride of woe.

The floweret pale to me soft spake,
"Dear brother, pluck thou me."
To the flower I whispered: "Nay, for thy sake,
Ne'er, ne'er can I pluck thee;
I seek with toil and care
The crimson flower fair."

The pale flower said: "Seek far, seek near,
Till thee cold death shall snare,
Thou seek'st in vain, ne'er bloometh here
The crimson flower fair;
But do thou pluck me now,
For I am wan as thou."

Thus murmured the flower and sore did plead,
Till I plucked it away outright,
And straight my heart did cease to bleed,
And all was within me bright.
And in my wounded breast
Angelic peace doth rest.

VII.

Where the stars shed rays illuming,
Joys await us ever blooming,
 Held from us on earth who stay ;
In death's cold embraces lying
Shall life wake to warmth undying,
 And night fade in endless day.

VIII.

Lonely in the forest chapel,
'Neath the image of the Virgin,
Lay a pale youth, with devotion
Low and reverently bending.

“ O Madonna ! here for ever
Let me kneel upon this threshold,
Do thou never hence repel me
To the world so cold and sinful.

“ O Madonna ! fall in sunlight
From thy brow thy radiant tresses,
Sweetest smiles are gently playing
Round thy mouth's celestial roses.

“ O Madonna ! thine eyes to me
Lighten like the starry splendours ;
Life's frail bark doth drifting wander,
And the stars do guide securely.

“ O Madonna ! without faltering
I have borne thy sorrow trial,
To a pure love blindly faithful,
Only in thy ardours glowing.

“O Madonna ! to-day hear me,
Full of grace and rich in wonders,
Grant me but a sign of favour,
But a slender sign of favour.”

Then was accomplished an awe-filling wonder,
Parted the walls and the chapel asunder ;
The youth himself what had happened scarce knew,
For straight all around him was changed to his view.

Amazed in a bright hall he stood, to his seeming,
There sat a Madonna but rayless nor beaming,
Transformed to a beautiful maid in her place,
Who greeted him smiling with childish grace.

And lo ! from her fair head dividing
Herself a lovely tress, confiding
In heavenly tones the youth she addressed :
“ This take for thy earthly meed and best.”

Say, what seals this consecration ?
Saw'st thou not the colours floating
Midst the skies in corruscation,
Iris' bow to men denoting ?

Angels up and down are wending
Upon rustling pinions winging ;
Wondrous strains are softly blending,
And sweet harmonies are ringing.

Knows the youth the glow that feeding
His heart's quest with sweet endeavour,
Onward to that land is leading
Where the myrtle blooms for ever.

IX.

To the moth its mother's care
Warned it, " Fear the candle's flare."
But to what its mother said
Little heed the young moth paid.

Round the light quick doth it come,
Flying with a whirring hum ;
Nor its mother's cry doth hear,
" Little moth, beware, beware ! "

Youthful blood, fiery blood
Plunges in the burning flood,
In the flame to leap doth dare ;
" Little moth, beware ! beware."

Flashes now its fiery breath,
Flame hath brought consuming death.
" Have a heed of maidens fair,
Little son, beware, beware ! "

X.

The day was sultry, my heart a-glow,
And ever with me I bore my woe ;
Forth I sped when fell night's gloom
To a sheltered spot where the roses bloom.

As hushed and lightly I drew me near,
Adown my cheeks coursed many a tear ;
In the chaliced rose as I glanced mine eyes
A radiant lustre seemed to rise.

And gladsome 'neath a rose-bush I slept,
A mocking dream o'er my senses swept ;
A rosy-hued maiden I beheld
Whose bosom a crimson bodice veiled.

She gave me rich treasures, a golden store,
Which straight to a golden mansion I bore,
And in this mansion a bright young crew
Of elves in merry dance round flew.

There danced twelve dancers without stay or rest,
And each the hand of the other pressed ;
And when one dance to its close had run,
Away quick another had straight begun.

To my ears the music these accents bore :
"The sunniest hours return no more,
The span of thy life but a vision deem,
And even this hour a dream in a dream."

The dream was done and the morn grew gray,
And my eye quick glanced to the rose as it lay.
O woe ! where the radiant glow had been,
Was an insect cold in its chalice seen.

XI.

Falsehood are thy kisses weaving
But their guile is bliss believed ;
O how sweet is the deceiving !
Sweeter still to be deceived !

Love, though coy thyself thou bearest,
Know I what thou grantest still ;
I'll believe whate'er thou swearest,
And will swear to what thou will.



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